AN

ESSAY

FOR

Reformation of Manners,

WHEREIN THE

Sword of the Word

In Concurrence with the

SWORD of the Magiſtrate,

Is drawn againſt

Immoralities.

Particularly, Thoſe of

Swearing,
Curſing,
Taking the Lord's Name in vain.

Prophanation of the Sabbath.
Drunkenneſs.
Uncleanneſs.

Plainly Shewing and Repreſenting from the Word of God, the DANGEROUS STATE and DREADFUL DOOM of all ſuch who Live and Dye Impenitently therein; together with moſt preſſing Arguments to perſwade them to a Speedy REFORMATION.

By *M. T.*

Prov. 29. 1. *He that being often Reproved, hardeneth his Neck, ſhall ſuddenly be deſtroyed, and that without Remedy.*

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THE EPISTLE TO THE *Religious* and *Pious* READERS.

WHAT is there more precious than the Soul, yet what leſs regarded? What greater Evil than Sin, yet how little lamented? What is there that ſhould be ſo Dear to us as the Glory of God, and what is there that ſhould go ſo near our Hearts, as to ſee the Name of God diſhonoured, yet how little are Men concerned about it? O where are the weeping Jeremiahs, *and the mourning* Davids? *How few are there that ſigh and groan for the Abominations that are committed in the Land? Who are there amongſt us, that do duly reſent the Diſhonour done to God hereby; and from an Holy Zeal kindled in our Breaſts, do endeavour to Vindicate the Honour of God, and do our utmoſt to Confront, and Oppoſe that Spirit of Prophaneneſs, which is grown ſo Rampant amongſt us?*

This is the very deſign of the enſuing Diſcourſe: Wherein I have ſtudied plainneſs, that it may be Obvious to the Capacity of the

meaneſt; and Brevity, that it may the more eaſily come to the Hands of the pooreſt.

Now I earneſtly beg your Aſſiſtance herein; lend an helping Hand every one of you according to your Capacity, Place and Station: See what you can do, to ſave the periſhing dying Souls of your poor Neighbours: Hath God Magnified the Riches of his Grace towards you? hath he choſen you out of the World, and diſtinguiſhed you from them, and made you Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven? look to the Rock from whence you were hewen, you were by Nature Children of Wrath even as they, 'tis Free Grace alone hath made the difference. Alas! Poor Creatures, they are not ſenſible of their Danger, but you know it; you ſee them Poſting apace to Hell, and will not you do what you can to prevent it? Have you no Bowels of Pity for them?

I beg you for your own Sake, as you would not be Guilty of their Blood, and would not have it laid to your Charge another Day for not Reproving, Warning and Exhorting them.

I beſeech you in their behalf, for the Sake of their Souls that are juſt ready to Periſh on the very Brink of Hell; have you never a Tear to drop for them who look with Death in their Face? O! Do your utmoſt to pluck them as Brands out of the Burning. It is Reported of Xerxes, *that being in the Head of an Army of Ten Hundred Thouſand Men, he went to the Top of an high Mountain to ſee them March by; and upon the Sight thereof he burſt forth into Tears, and being askt by his Nobles why he Wept; he replyed, I Weep to think that within an Hundred Years, there will not be one of all theſe gallant Men alive; if the Conſideration of this made an* Heathen *to Weep, how much more ſhould you Weep, to think how many Millions there are now living, that in a few Years will be not only in their Graves, but in Hell!*

Let me alſo beſeech you for the Sake of the Nation; God hath threatned us once and again, and yet hath ſtayed his Hand, as one loath to deſtroy us: But, have we not now cauſe to fear, leaſt he ſhould draw his Sword, fourbiſh it, and prepare it for a Slaughter? Is not Divine Providence already blowing the Trumpet, and ſounding an Alarm, and do not the Judgements of God ſeem to be in their March towards us? And if once God begins to contend with us, who knows what the end thereof will be in the Day of his Vengeance, after ſo long Forbearance.

And

And eſpecially, I beſeech you for the Lord's Sake, as you would ſhew your ſelves to be his Children, and tender of your Fathers Honour; doth it not go near your Hearts to ſee his Name Diſhonoured and Blaſphemed, his Laws Violated, and his Authority Deſpiſed? Can you ſee all this, and hold your Peace? Shall Satan with his Inſtruments and Agents, Factors for Hell, be ſo Politick, and Induſtrious to promote his Intereſt, and Advance his Kingdom, and will not you quit your ſelves as the Loyal Subjects of your Lord, in uſing your utmoſt Diligence to oppoſe him, and Advance the Kingdom of your Lord? Fear not the bold and daring looks of Sin, nor its Hectoring, and Ruffling in all its Pageantry: Confront it, oppoſe it, make all the Efforts you can againſt it, where ever you ſee it. It is the grand Enemy of your Lord, which hath bid defiance to Heaven; ſhew your Zeal and Courage for your Lord, fear not its Bluſterings, tho' Arm'd with all the Power of Hell.

'Tis true, the Vices, Immoralities and Debaucheries of the Nation, is a general complaint, and indeed ought to be lamented; but let us ask our ſelves, have we done what we might for a Reformation? For beſides, what Magiſtrates may do by their Coercive Power, how much might private Chriſtians do alſo in order hereunto!

Had we but improved our Capacity according to the Incouragement, and Opportunity we have had of late Years, by uſing the moſt Effectual Ways and Means Conducing in order to a Reformation, and eſpecially the Reformation of Youth, (of whom there is more hope than of old hardned and obſtinate Sinners) might not this Generation now ſpringing up have been more hopeful, whereby a new Face of things might e're long be ſeen both in Church and State: And if God ſhould have a Controverſie with this Nation, and bring an overflowing Scourge upon us, who knows how deeply the People of God themſelves may ſuffer in National Calamities for this very Cauſe, viz. *their too great neglect, and unconcernedneſs in promoting a Reformation.*

Let us bewail, and be deeply humbled, not only for our own Sins, but the Sins of others; and let us be of a Publick Spirit, and be concern'd not only for our own Salvation, but the Salvation of others: This will be to us an Evidence of the Truth of our Grace.

Let us Live more Exemplary our ſelves; let our Lights be ſhining, and our Lamps be burning, let our Converſation Grace

our Profession, let us Exercise a Conscience void of Offence towards God and Man; let us give them no just Occasion to Reflect upon us for Covetousness, Earthly Mindedness, &c. and to say of us, tho' we are not Swearers, Drunkards, &c. as they, yet we are Covetuous, unjust in our Dealings, &c. they are glad, if they can find any Occasion to disgrace your Profession with such Reflections as these. Let our Conversation be Heavenly, our Discourse Savoury, and let an even Spun Thread of Religiou run thro' all our Actions: By this means, the Application we make of our selves to them, whether by way of Reproof, or Councel and Exhortation, will have the more Weight, and may have the greater Influence upon them.

And think it not enough, and that you have done your Duty; if occasionally you hear them Swear, &c. you Reprove them for it; but as for those that are your Neighbours and Acquaintance, and especially those that you have a more than ordinary Intimacy with and Interest in, Visit them, go to their Houses, and with all Seriousness and Affectionateness, lay open before them the Odious and Abominable Nature of Sin, and the Sin of their Nature, and then in particular, the Sins they are Guilty of; tell them of the Danger they are in, and the Wrath of God, and dreadful Torments of Hell, which they must for ever endure without Repentance and a saving Faith. In Instructing them, do it with all Condescension and Plainness. In Reproving them, do it in Wisdom, with a Spirit of Meekness. In Councelling and Exhorting them, do it with all Gravity, Seriousness and Affectionateness, that they may see that you are in good earnest, and how much you are concerned about them: And in Reasoning with them, use all the most Cogent, and Pathetical Motives and Arguments you can to perswade them; and you that are Rich, you have a greater Advantage and Capacity than others, to Influence your poor Neighbours by your Charitable Assistance; and among other things, you may give them good Books; and wherein can you better expend your Charity? Books Plain, Pertinent, and suitable to them; injoin them the serious Perusal thereof, and serious Consideration of what they Read, and afterward Discourse with them about the Subject matter thereof, and endeavour to set it close and home to their Consciences. This Course may (thro' the Blessing of God) be more Beneficial to some, than all he Sermons ever they heard. Exhort them to a serious Consideration

on

tion of their State every Day, and Examination of themſelves; and to be Diligent in the uſe of all Means God hath appointed in order to their Salvation: Put them on Prayer, both in their Families if they have any, and alſo ſecret Prayer; and charge them ſtrictly to obſerve the Lords Day, and attend on his Ordinances: By this Courſe you may peradventure be the Inſtruments of the Converſion of many, and the Reformation of moſt; however you will be clear of the Blood of their Souls; and beſides, you your ſelves will reap the Benefit and Advantage hereof, your Hearts will hereby be the more warmed, and your Graces being thus exerciſed, will be increaſed and ſtrengthned.

Moreover, how well will God take this at your Hands, when he ſees you thus Zealous for his Glory, and Faithful in improving your Talents; you may not only have your Crown of Glory more weighty hereafter, but you may be favoured with a ſpecial Priviledge here, even to be Tri'd in the Day of Gods Wrath, and be Marked out for ſafety in the midſt of Deſolating Judgments, when you may ſee others falling at your Right Hand and Left, you may be preſerved, and Survivor, to ſee the Glorious Appearance of Chriſt in his Kingdom upon the Earth, which ſhall inſue thoſe dreadful Convulſions in the Old Heaven and Earth, and thoſe Violent Hurricanes and Cataſtrophes in Kingdoms and States; that ſhall make way for the introducing a new Heaven and new Earth, wherein Righteouſneſs doth dwell.

Finally, Pray for them, Pray for your poor Carnal Neighbours and Friends, Pray for a poor ſinking dying Nation; fear leaſt its Preſervation hitherto, might be a Reſervation for more dreadful Judgments: Tho' a Nation be under very deplorable Circumſtances, yet tis not in a hopeleſs and deſperate State, until God reſtrains a Spirit of Prayer for it: Sad is the Caſe of ſuch a people, as once was the Caſe of the Jews, *in Jeremiah* 7. 16. Therefore Pray not thou for this People, neither lift up cry nor Prayer for them, neither make Interceſſion to me; for I will not hear thee. *When once God comes to theſe, that he is ſo highly provoked by the Sins of a Nation, that he comes to a full Reſolution, the Decree is gone forth, and the irreverſible Sentence paſt; as in Ezek.* 14. 14. 16. 18. 20. Tho' theſe three Men, *Noah, Daniel,* and *Job* were in it, they ſhould deliver but their own Souls by their Righteouſneſs, ſaith the Lord God. *Ver.* 16. Tho' theſe Three Men were in it,

as

as I live, ſaith the Lord, they ſhall deliver neither Sons nor Daughters; they only ſhall be delivered, but the Land ſhall be deſolate. *God grant that this be not the Caſe of* England: *O Pray, Pray, Pray in hope; who knows but God may be Gracious? Pray*, that God would pour out a Spirit of Repentance and Reformation upon the Land, that he would chuſe to Refine, and Reform us, and not to ruine us: *And let thoſe amongſt you, that as* Moſes *can ſtand in the Gap, you that are the interceeding* Abrahams, *the wreſtling* Jacobs, *the* Daniels *that are greatly beloved, the high Favourites of the Court of Heaven, that have more than ordinarily the Ear and Heart of God, improve your Intereſt at the Throne of Grace, by earneſt Supplications for a poor Nation.*

And let us all be deeply humbled before the Lord, not only for the Lewdneſs and Immoralities of the Prophane, but the Looſeneſs and irregularities of Profeſſors, their Lukewarmneſs, Earthly Mindedneſs and Conformity to the World, for which we have Reaſons to fear, leaſt God ſhould put the ſame Cup into our Hands, that our Proteſtant Neighbours have been Drinking ſo deeply of; yea, let us be deeply Humbled for the Miſcarriages of Gods own Children, for which he may in his Fatherly Diſpleaſure, debate with them with the Rod in his Hand, and Exerciſe them with his New Covenant Diſcipline.

Let us all in a moſt Humble Poſture, prepare to Meet our God with Weeping and Supplication.

ADVERTISEMENT.

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AN

ESSAY

FOR

Reformation of Manners.

WHO is there that hath any Sight, or due Senſe of the Abominable Nature of *Sin*, with the dreadful Effects and Tendency thereof, and ſees how it Abounds every where in the Nation, that doth not lay it to Heart; and in the Conſideration thereof is not deeply Affected? Eſpecially, when he Conſiders what Means have been made uſe of to put a Check thereunto; Laws have been Enacted againſt Immoralities; and *His Majeſty* hath Iſſued forth his Royal Proclamation, to ſtir up all Officers whom it may Concern, to put them into Execution: But is there not a Spirit in the Nation that doth oppoſe a Work of *Reformation*? And doth not Wickedneſs grow more Rampant? Indeed in the City of *London* and ſome Corporations, where Magiſtrates are Zealous for God, there hath been ſome Check given thereunto; but in other Parts of the Nation, there is little or no Notice taken of.

What Swearing and Curſing, Drunkenneſs, Uncleanneſs, Prophanation of the Lord's Day, and ſuch like Abo-

minable Enormities, the very *Badge* of the Black Regiment of Hell, are to be ſeen and heard almoſt every where? To ſee and hear theſe things amongſt *Heathens*, and Barbarous Nations, would not ſeem ſo ſtrange: But that ſuch ſhould be found in *England*, amongſt thoſe that call themſelves *Chriſtians*, where the Goſpel hath been Preached ſo long; and that the Power of Corruption ſhould be ſo mighty and prevailing in the Hearts of Men by Nature, that it will not be born down by the greateſt Efforts that can be made againſt it, either by the Magiſtracy or Miniſtry, is even ſurprizing.

Men ſeem to be of the ſame Spirit with the *Unjuſt Judge* in the Parable: They fear not God, nor regard Man.

It is certainly the Concern of all, that have any Zeal for the Glory of God, any Bowels of Pitty towards poor dying and periſhing Souls, any Loyalty to the Government, and Love to the Nation wherein they Live, to endeavour to uſe all effectual Means, to put a ſtop to growing Prophaneneſs and Immoralities, and do their utmoſt to promote a Reformation.

If every one, with a Spirit of Meekneſs, would reprove thoſe they find *Guilty*, and endeavour to make them ſenſible of the Evil of their Sin, and ſhew them from the Word of God, what the doleful End thereof will be at laſt; and if every one would give Information to the Magiſtrate concerning thoſe that remain *Obſtinate*, and will not be reformed nor reſtrained, but by the inflicting of the Penalty of the Laws; who knows what an Influence this may have? In fine, if we were all Diligent and in good Earneſt herein, every one according to his Sphere and Capacity: *Private Perſons* that take Cognizance of any that are Guilty, to Reprove, (and if need be) make Information, and the *Magiſtrate* to Inflict the due Penalty, and *Miniſters* to Manage the Sword of the Word againſt it, and Preach it down, there would be great hope Vice would be ſuppreſt; at leaſt would not dare to walk ſo bare faced as now it doth: The Sword of the Magiſtrate, together with the two edged Sword of the Word, may do ſome Execution: Vice hereby may be wounded, tho' not ſlain;

ſlain; ſuppreſſed, tho' not deſtroyed; it may become as a Lyon Couchant, whereas before it was as a Lyon Rampant: And how deſirable is it, if but this may be effected?

It will be worth our ſerious enquiry whence it is, that the Law of Sin in the Hearts of *ſome Men*, now under the light of the Goſpel, is of that force that it will not eaſily be controuled by the Law of God or Man; but will break forth into groſs Immoralities; and is hardly to be reſtrained without great Severities.

1. Either it proceeds from a *groſs Ignorance* of the Fundamental Principles of Religion; whereof I am perſwaded, many in this Nation can give but little better Account than the Heathen *Americans*. Or,

2. From a ſecret *Heart Atheiſm*, and Infidelity; Men may indeed Profeſs to believe a Deity, and that the Scriptures are the Word of God; but their Faith is only *Dogmatical*, and *Opinionative*; it is only a confuſed *Idea*, and ſuperficial Notion in the Brain, not at all affecting the Heart; they live as if they did believe nothing leſs. Some are *Scepticks* in Religion, and are ready to Queſtion every thing thereof. Some look upon Religion only as a *Model* framed by humane Policy, for the moſt eaſie Adminiſtration of Government; and there are ſprung up among us a Generation of Men, called the *Deiſts*, Factors for Hell, that have done very much to Debauch the Nation. Or,

3. From an *Inadvertency*, a Senſeleſs, Stupid, and inconſiderate Frame of Spirit: Men hear the Word of God as Perſons unconcerned: God Commands, but they regard not; God Threatens, but they fear not: They live as if they had no Souls to ſave; or as if it were an indifferent thing to them, whether they are ſaved or not. Or,

4. From a *Cuſtomarineſs* in Sinning; the moſt groſs and heinous Sins, which at firſt ſight may affrighten, and ſtartle the Conſciences of Sinners, will by a Cuſtomarineſs therein, and repeated Acts thereof become Familiar, and will be palliated at laſt under the Denomination of Human Frailties and Weakneſs.

Theſe things being conſidered, I conceive the moſt effectual Courſe that may be taken in order to a *Reformation*, is to endeavour to convince Men, and make them Senſible by the Word of God of the Heinouſneſs of their Sins, as alſo of the dreadful Effects and end of them, if they continue in a State of Impenitency; and plainly to Reaſon with them, ſhewing them their Folly and Madneſs herein, and that with all Affectionateneſs; that they may ſee how much we are in good earneſt, and how much we are concerned about them, and how loath we are they ſhould be Damned; uſing the moſt Cogent Arguments we can, to perſwade them to a Reformation, in hope that the Spirit of the Lord may Concur, ſtrike in therewith, and effectually Work on their Hearts and Conſciences.

This is the *Deſign* of this ſmall Tract; and O that it might be a Word fitly ſpoken, as *Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver!* O that I had the Skill to take Arrows out of the Quiver of the Almighty, that might Wound Sin to the very Heart! O that I knew how to wield, and manage with all Dexterity the two edged Sword of the Word by the help of the Holy Spirit, *to the dividing aſunder of the Soul and Spirit, and of the Joints and Marrow!*

O what a ſad Spectacle and Heart affecting Sight is it, to ſee Prophane and diſſolute Wretches [*poor Creatures*] walking up and down with the Black Hew of Hell upon them, that carry the very Marks of the Devil to whom they belong in their Foreheads, being Viſibly his Profeſt Vaſſals and Slaves; who whilſt they are one Day in their Mirth and Jollity ſatisfying their Luſts, may the next Day be in Hell! O how ſhould we tremble at the Conſideration of their dreadful State, and do our utmoſt to pluck them as Brands out of the Burning!

O how ſhould it eſpecially go near our Hearts, to ſee ſuch as are our *Neighbours* and *Acquaintance* poſting apace to Hell, of whom we have cauſe to fear, that without a ſaving change wrought upon them, they will in a ſhort time be Firebrands in Hell, and take up their Lodgings in everlaſting Flames! O how ſhould we Weep over them! Methinks I ſee ſuch ſtanding at the Judgment Seat

Seat of God with Horror and Trembling, and from thence hurried into the Bottomleſs Pit, and there Tormented by the Devil, ſcorching in unquenchable Flames of Fire and Brimſtone. Methinks I hear their dolorous Groans and Sighs, their hideous Shrieks and Cries, their Weeping, Wailing and Gnaſhing of Teeth. Ah poor wretched Creatures! How can you dwell with devouring Fire? How can you abide in everlaſting Burnings? O how can ye bear up under the weight of the Wrath of an Almighty God to all Eternity? O how am I concerned for you, my Bowels are moved within me? What ſhall I do to alarm you? What Arguments ſhall I uſe to perſwade you? What Motives to prevail with you to fly from the Wrath to come, and eſcape the Place of Torments?

Ye bold and daring Sinners, that have no fear of God before your Eyes, but give Rains to your Luſts, that ſlight the Royal Authority of God your Creator, affront his Glorious Majeſty, trample upon his Laws, and ſcorn to be ruled by them, that are ready to ſay with thoſe in Jer. 6. 16. 17. *Thus ſaith the Lord, ſtand ye in the ways, and ſee and ask for the old Paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye ſhall find reſt for your Souls*; *but they ſaid, we will not walk therein. Alſo I ſet Watchmen over you*; *ſaying, hearken to the Sound of the Trumpet, but they ſaid we will not hearken*; and in Jerem. 44. 16. *As for the Word that thou haſt ſpoken unto us in the Name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee.* When the great God cries unto you, *O do not this abominable thing that I hate!* what do you but *interpretatively* ſay, we will do it? We will not be bound up by his Laws; we can't bear it to be controul'd by them; we will break his Bands aſunder, and caſt his Cords from us; we will walk after the Imaginations of our own Hearts. But are you thus obſtinately reſolved, are you indeed peremptory herein? Then hear your Doom out of the Mouth of the Lord himſelf, who will be your Judge, Luk. 19. 27. *But thoſe mine Enemies which would not that I ſhould Reign over them, bring them hither and ſlay them before me*; Will you ſay then? No, but we will not be brought forth, we will not be ſlain, Execution ſhall not be done upon us. Tho' you will not ſtoop and bow to his

Scepter

Scepter of Grace now, he will hereafter break you with his *Rod* of *Iron.*

Let me a little Expoſtulate with you, how is it you are not affraid, that you do not dread the Terrors of the Almighty, nor tremble at his Threatnings which he hath denounced againſt ſuch as you are? Will you dare to Adventure upon the thick Boſſes of his Buckler? Will you dare to run upon the drawn Sword of his Vengeance? Will you Contend with the Almighty? Can you make your Part good with him? If he ſhall Whet his glittering Sword and bend his Bow, and ſhoot the Arrows of his Vengeance againſt you, Woe be to you!

It may be thought Strange and Incredible, that any ſhould be ſo peremptory Obſtinate and Daring; and ſome of the worſt of Men will be ready to Vindicate themſelves, and think ſurely they are clear from this Charge; but let me tell you, all you that are *Guilty* of groſs *Immoralities*, and continue Obſtinate and Impenitent, I hope to make it appear to your own Conſciences, that you are the Perſons concerned herein, and that you are verily Guilty in this Matter; and if you will not be Convinced now, I can aſſure you from the Word of God, that you will find to your Eternal Woe, that you will ſhortly be arraign'd, Convicted, and Condemned at the Judgment Seat of Jeſus Chriſt as his Obſtinate Enemies and Rebels.

I cannot particularly enumerate all the groſs *Immoralities* Men are Guilty of, neither is it my Deſign, but I ſhall only mention a few, that may be found *rife* and *common* every where in the Nation. As,

1. The Abominable Sin of *Swearing*, it is that which is expreſly forbidden by our Saviour in Mat. 5. 34. *But I ſay unto you Swear not at all.* Some may be ready to think it a Rhetorical *Ornament* to *Grace* their Speech, and *aggrandize* their Diſcourſe, but O the Folly and Madneſs of Men! Can that which is an Abominable Sin againſt God, be an Ornament and Grace to our Diſcourſe? How do Men Glory in that which is their ſhame?

Some think to beſpeak *Credit* hereby to the Truth of what they ſay; but will any Wiſe Man judge, that he that makes no Conſcience of common ordinary Swearing, will

will make Conſcience of telling a Lye, and Confirming it with an Oath. Many in Swearing make uſe of Oaths in a curtail'd Corrupt ſort of Dialect, wherein they Profanely abuſe what is moſt ſacred belonging to the great God, and Jeſus Chriſt his Son, not fit here to be Written; and ſome are ready to Plead that they are no Oaths, but yet being rendred in their proper Words, they are moſt abominable Oaths. Very many in their common ordinary Diſcourſe, abuſe that precious Grace of *Faith*, and Plead if they do not ſay [*by Faith*] it is no Oath, but let them know, how light ſoever they make of it, it is an implicite Oath, the Word [*By*] is here implied, tho' not expreſſed; I would fain know of ſuch, what elſe it doth ſignifie in their Diſcourſe, or to what end do they uſe it, if it hath not the Nature of an Oath? Certainly they are prophane Perſons, that do in every frivolous Diſcourſe ordinarily abuſe that precious Grace; and it is to be doubted, they are altogether Strangers to the ſaving Work thereof in their Hearts.

As Men underſtand the genuine Senſe and Meaning of each others Expreſſions, tho' not in their proper Words, but very much Curtail'd, and Corrupt according to the Dialect of the Country wherein they Live together, as well as if they had Expreſt themſelves in the moſt proper Words; ſo you will one Day find that your Clipt and Curtail'd *Oaths* will be brought in againſt you to your Condemnation, as much as if you had uttered them in their own proper Words.

Beſides the common ordinary *Oaths*, ſome have been ſo prodigiouſly Wicked as to invent new *Oaths*, as if the common *Oaths* did come ſhort of Expreſſing that Bold and Audacious Impiety of their Hearts, in daring Heaven, and affronting the tremendous Majeſty of God.

It is ſtrange to conſider that Men ſhould be ſo Prone to this Sin, and that it is ſo difficult to reſtrain them from it, when they cannot Plead either Pleaſure or Profit thereby to gratify their Carnal Senſes, which are the Incitements and Temptations to other Sins.

But woe to thoſe that are found Guilty hereof; let them Read Zech. 5. 1, 2, 3. *Every one that Sweareth ſhall*

be

be cut off. The Curſe of the Lord is in their Houſes. In the Viſion of *Ezekiel*, *cap.* 2. *v.* 10. he ſaw a Roll which had in it *Lamentations, Mournings and Woes*; and in this of *Zecharia*, there is Mention made *of a Roll Twenty Cubits in Length, and Ten in Breadth*, which will contain a great number of Lamentations, Mournings and Woes, and all theſe light upon the Houſe of the Swearer and Blaſphemer; to this purpoſe alſo ſee, Jam. 5. 12. *But above all things my Brethren, Swear not, neither by Heaven, neither by the Earth, neither by any other Oath, but let your yea be yea, and your nay be nay, leaſt ye fall into Condemnation.* You that are Guilty of this Sin, if you do not Repent and Reform, you may aforehand before you come to your ſolemn and Publick Trial at the Day of Judgment Read here your Doom: For is it not plainly intimated here, that thoſe that are Guilty hereof, are in danger to fall into Condemnation, and by this Word ſhall you be judged hereafter? Pauſe a little here, and ſtop a while before you Read any further. Conſider your State and Tremble; you may ſee by this how God takes it at your Hands, and how highly he is offended; the Wrath and Vengeance of God is gone out againſt you, and ſooner or later if you continue Impenitent, it will certainly fall upon you; his *Curſe* is already upon you and your Hearts. O! Think what an angry look will appear in the Face of God upon you at the Day of Judgment, and what an heavy Charge will be then brought in againſt you! for if a Man ſhall anſwer *for every idle Word* at the Day of Judgment; as in *Mat.* 12. 16. the Judge himſelf there tells us, much more ſhall he give account of his Idle and Blaſphemous *Oaths.*

Furthermore, the Sin of *Swearing*, when it becomes a National Sin, brings the Judgments and Curſe of God upon a whole Nation, Jerem. 23. 10. *So becauſe of Swearing the Land Mourneth, and the pleaſant Places of the Wilderneſs are dryed up.*

2. *Curſing*, and horrible Imprecations; and commonly thoſe that accumſtome themſelves to Swearing, make as little Conſcience of Curſing. The Pſalmiſt in the 10th. *Pſalm* giving a Deſcription of Wicked Men in an Enumeration

meration of ſeveral Sins whereof they are Guilty, mentions this of Curſing, v. 7. *his Mouth is full of Curſing and deceit.*

We ought not to uſe any Imprecations againſt any; God who hath Created his Creatures, hath only Power to Curſe them; for how is this Conſiſtent with the loving our Neighbour as our ſelves? And how is it Conſiſtent with that Golden Rule, *to do unto others whatſoever we would they ſhould do unto us?* How many Sins are there in the Bowels of this? Men bewray therein their inordinate Paſſions, if not Envy; Revenge alſo, if not Heart Murder: We ought not to Curſe the unreaſonable ſenſeleſs Creature, for this Curſe redoundeth to God himſelf, as *he who mocketh the Poor reproacheth his Maker*, Prov. 17. 5. For he that Curſeth the Creatures, in effect, he Curſeth the Creator who made them; for unreaſonable Creatures act according to the inſtinct of Nature which God hath given them; ſo to Curſe the Creatures as they have Relation to him that owneth them, is a great Sin, for he that wiſheth Evil to the Creatures, wiſheth Evil to the Owner of them.

And by how much the *greater* the Perſons are againſt whom Imprecations are uttered, by ſo much the more is the Guilt of the Sin *aggravated.* The *Iſralietiſh* Womans Son that Blaſphemed the Name of the Lord, and Curſed in *Levit.* 24. 14. was by Gods Appointment put to Death, v. 15. *whoſoever ſhall Curſe his God, ſhall bear his Sin*, and Levit. 20. 9. Exod. 21. 17. *Every one that Curſed his Father or his Mother, were to be put to Death*; and in *Exod.* 22. 28. there is a ſpecial Charge given concerning Magiſtrates, *thou ſhalt not Revile the Gods, nor Curſe the Ruler of thy People.*

But O to what an height of Impiety are Men arrived! what dreadful Imprecations will they uſe, not only againſt others but themſelves? Some in a Fit of Revengeful Paſſion, will not only Curſe others with bitter Imprecations, whom they ſuppoſe to have given them never ſo little Affront, or done them never ſo little Injury, but to ſhew the height of their Spirits, their undaunted Courage, Reſoluteneſs, and daring Confidence, will *Curſe*

and *Damn* themſelves, thinking hereby to ſtrike a Terror on others, and make them believe, that they are ſo far from being affraid of Men, that they fear not God, nor his Damning of them.

O the lamentable and degenerate State of Mankind, that of Men, are become as Devils to themſelves and one another! O the Revenge and Cruelty that is in the Hearts of Men againſt one another! That if any do but Affront or Wrong them, nothing leſs will Appeaſe their Paſſion, and ſatisfie Revenge, than that ſome fatal Miſchief or Evil ſhould befall them; yea, nothing leſs than Death; yea, than their *Damnation* beſides; and hereupon, by their Imprecations invoke the Almighty to Execute their Sinful Paſſion, and Revenge upon them. O that Men ſhould arrive to that height of Wickedneſs, as to be more daring than the Devils themſelves; they do even dare God to Damn them, they make light of Damnation, whereas the Devils Tremble at the Conſideration of their Eternal Doom! Ah *poor Creatures*, you little think what 'tis to be Damned, you make light of it, as if it were a trivial Thing not to be feared.

Some, when they Curſe or Swear, will ſay *God forgive me, I was in a Paſſion, or I was provoked to it*; but *thou Wretch*, becauſe thy Fellow Creature hath offended thee, or becauſe thou art angry with him, wilt thou Revenge thy ſelf on thy Creator, by breaking his Laws, and affronting His Majeſty? Doſt thou think this will ſtand for a plauſible Excuſe hereafter, and will be a ſufficient Plea for thee? Doſt thou think *a God forgive me*, will ſalve and mend the matter? O Tremble to think how thou thus trifleſt with the great God!

God hath ſometimes upon this Account, made ſome *Examples* of his Diſpleaſure, and warning Pieces to others; as I have heard of one that was wont to Imprecate himſelf, by ſaying *never go more*, I will do this, or the other thing, untill at laſt the Judgment of God ſeized him, for as ſoon as the Words were gone out of his Mouth, he preſently fell down, became Impotent in his Limbs, and not able to go. How common are theſe Imprecations in the Mouths of ſome, *never go more, never ſpeake more* and

ſuch

ſuch like ; let ſuch take Warning, and fear leaſt God ſhould in Juſtice inflict on them that ſame Evil, which they Imprecate on themſelves ? How many have wiſhed bitter Curſes and Imprecations to themſelves, to Vindicate themſelves of the Imputation of a Crime that have been laid to their Charge, when all the while they have known themſelves Guilty of the ſame ; and ſometimes, what Evil they have wiſhed to themſelves, hath accordingly come upon them ? I have heard of ſome that have Curſed their Children, and accordingly their Curſe hath fallen upon them.

No manner of Curſings or Imprecations ſhould be uſed in any wiſe, no not againſt our Enemies, according to that in Rom. 12. 14. *Bleſs them that perſecute you, Bleſs and Curſe not*, and *Mat.* 5. 44.

Curſing is the Language of Hell ; we may reaſonably Imagine, that a great Part of the Black and Woful Eternity of poor Damned Creatures, will be ſpent in horrible Curſings, Bannings and Ravings ; and that you that are Addicted hereunto, and will not be Reformed, you openly Proclaim to whom and to what Place you belong ; and if you will not take Warning and leave it off, you are like to ſpend an Eternity in Hell, in Curſing with thoſe Damned Wretches like your ſelves ; and know that you are already under the *Curſe* of God, and if you Dye in an Impenitent State, you will find it will fall heavy upon you.

3. *The taking the Name of the Lord in Vain.* How dare Men in their ordinary Diſcourſe upon the leaſt Occaſion, or none at all, invoke, and call upon the Tremendous Name of God ? How common is *O Lord*, and *O God*, in the Mouths of ſome ? And are there not many in this Nation ſcarcely make uſe of it otherwiſe than in this Profane Way and Manner, that are altogether Strangers to an Humble, ſolemn invoking the Name of God in Prayer ? It may be, ſome ſay over the *Lords Prayer* Once or Twice a Day, wherein they ſay, *Hallowed by thy Name* ; when all the Day long they are Profaning the Name of the Great God, by taking it in Vain. O what Wretches are theſe that thus Mock with God ! but be not deceiv-

ed, God will not be Mocked! Can you ſay the Third Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in Vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltleſs that takes his Name in Vain.* You ſee here it is Expreſſly forbidden; how is it then that you dare to do it? You that are Guilty hereof, what think you of your ſelves? Let Conſcience ſpeak, God hath forbidden it, yet you will do it; but what will be the Iſſue at laſt? God will not hold you *Guiltleſs* in this manner of Expreſſion by a Figure, there is more Underſtood than is Expreſt; the meaning is, he will certainly Puniſh ſuch, whoever goes Unpuniſhed theſe ſhall not; God will ſeverely deal with ſuch Guilty Perſons. *Guilt is the Obligation to Puniſhment for the Tranſgreſſions of the Law.*

You that are Guilty hereof, through a long accuſtoming your ſelves hereunto, you may be ready to make light of it, and think, becauſe it is common in almoſt every ones Mouth, that there is no great matter of Evil in it, that can ſcarcely ſpeak, but in your Vain, Frothy, Trivial, and Frivolous Diſcourſes *will be taking the Name of God in Vain.* O remember the *Name* of God is a *Glorious* and *fearful Name!* Deut. 28. 58. A *Great* and *Terrible Name*, Pſal. 99, 3. *It is dreadful among the Heathens*, Malach. 1. 14. So Great and Glorious, ſo Fearful and Tremendous is the Name of God, that you thus take in Vain, and ſooner or later, you ſhall know how highly God is diſpleaſed with you for it; for God is very Tender of the Glory of his Name, and he will have his Name Sanctified; you will be ready to look upon your ſelves as Chriſtians, but let me tell you, you may be Rankt among thoſe that are the Enemies of God, you have that Black Mark of theirs upon you; ſee Pſal. 139. 20. *For they ſpeak againſt thee Wickedly, and thine Enemies take thy Name in Vain.* O fear, leaſt you ſhould be numbred amongſt Gods Enemies, and as Enemies he ſhould deal with you!

This is a Sin, that I doubt may be found among ſome that make ſomewhat of a *Profeſſion*, and are free from other groſs Enormities; but let not any of you what ever Profeſſion you make, or from whatſoever other Sins you abſtain,

ſtain, think your ſelves fair for Heaven, and flatter your ſelves with hopes thereof; if you can allow your ſelves in this Sin, and ordinarily take the Name of the Lord in Vain: Say not, tho' you do it, you do not allow your ſelves in it, when you ordinarily do it; for had you indeed the fear of God in your Hearts, you would not dare to do it, but being made ſenſible of the Evil thereof, you would ſoon leave it off.

Hitherto I have mentioned only the Sins of the Tongue, and you that are Guilty of theſe abominable Evils, let me beſeech you, be perſwaded to ſet a Watch over your Lips, and refrain from theſe Sins for the time to come, and why will you not be perſwaded? Why ſhould I not prevail with you? What Pleaſure can you take in them? Or what Advantage or Profit can you have thereby? You do hereby greatly diſhonour God, and kindle his Wrath againſt you, the Flames of Hell will Burn ſo much the Hotter upon you, that Member *the Tongue*, wherewith you have ſo often Diſhonoured and Blaſphemed the Name of God, will be the more intolerably Scorched and Tormented; for that Member together with the reſt, will have a very deep ſhare in the Sufferings and Torments of the Body, as we have plainly intimated by our Saviour in the Parable of the *Rich Man* and *Lazarus*, Luk. 16. 24. *And he cryed ſaying, Father* Abraham *have Mercy on me, and ſend* Lazarus *that he may Dip the Tip of his Finger in Water and cool my Tongue, for I am Tormented in this Flame.* O what dreadful Gripings and Gnawings will there then be of the Worm Conſcience! O what Laſhes will it give the Sinner then! And tell him, *thou Wretch*, this Tongue of thine that thou didſt make uſe of in Curſing and Swearing, and Blaſpheming the Name of God, now thou muſt uſe in Wailing, in Lamentation, in Howling, and Scrieching Cries to all Eternity; had it not been for theſe thy Sins, thy Torments had not been ſo great, and now as great, and as intolerable as they are, theſe Torments thou muſt endure for ever and ever. O the dreadful Caſe of ſuch poor Wretches! The very Conſideration hereof makes me even Tremble, and is ready to Overwhelm my Spirits in the

the Writing hereof: O that it might have the ſame Influence on you in Reading, that you might flee from the Wrath to come, and eſcape this Place of Torments; we Read 16. Revel. 10. *When the Fifth Angel poured out his Vial upon the Seat of the Beaſt, and his Kingdom was full of Darkneſs, they gnaw'd their Tongues for Pain.* O what gnawing of Tongues for Pain will there be in Hell!

Let me earneſtly Beſeech you in Pity to your poor Souls, leave off theſe Sins, Bridle your Tongues when you are about to Swear, Curſe, or take the Name of God in Vain, preſently think with your ſelves, O what ſhall I ſuffer for this hereafter in Hell; I am now about to add Fewel to the Fire, kindling the Flames, and increaſing my Guilt to the aggravating of my Torments hereafter!

Say not, we have accuſtomed our ſelves ſo long to this manner of Speech, that we know not how to give it over; why, Do not you find the Preſence of an Holy and Grave *Perſonage*, that you know will ſharply reprove you, ſtrike ſome awe upon you? Or the Preſence of a *Magiſtrate*, which you know will Inflict on you the Penalty of the Law, make you Watchful over your ſelves, and reſtrain your Tongues? And will not the Conſideration of the Preſence of *God*, who always ſees and hears you, ſtrike a Dread and Awe upon you? And will not the Conſideration of the Torments of Hell bridle your Tongues? Or are you indeed more afraid of Men than you are of God? I hope I have ſufficiently made it appear to you from the Word of God, that theſe are groſs abominable Sins, and Living and Dying therein without Repentance, you will be Damned to all Eternity; what ſay you? Do you believe this or not? If you do, methinks you ſhould Tremble at the Thoughts thereof; and fear every Word you ſpeak, leaſt you ſhould offend with your Lips: But if not, call not your ſelves Chriſtians, but Heathens and Infidels.

4. Another Sin is the *Prophaning the Lords Day.* God hath reſerved only one Day in Seven for himſelf, to be wholly Dedicated to his Service; wherein we ought to ſequeſter our ſelves from all our worldly Imployments, except thoſe of Neceſſity and Mercy, and alſo from all Recreations,

creations, which may be Lawful on other Days; we are not herein to think our own Thoughts, ſpeak our own Words, or do our own Works; but this Day ought to be ſpent wholly in the Service of God, both in Publick and Private Duties, and to ſhew the great Importance of this Duty, and the great Concernedneſs of God about it, and to beſpeak our greateſt Care and Diligence in the Obſervation thereof; there is a Note of *Remembrance* prefixt to this Commandment, *Remember to keep Holy the Sabbath Day*: We find that God had a great Controverſy with the *Jews* for Prophaning the Sabbath; and God hath ſometimes ſhewn his Diſpleaſure, by inflicting Remarkable Judgments on Sabbath-breakers, in our Days under the Goſpel; and yet notwithſtanding, how many are there in this Nation that take but little Notice of this Commandment; they may indeed reſt from their daily Labour and Imployment; and it were to be wiſht, that even that could be ſaid of all? Are there not many to be found, that have not ſo much as a form of Godlineſs, nor ſhew of Religion, that attend no where on the Publick Ordinances of God, but ſpend the whole Day in Idleneſs, Paſtimes and Recreations. Others there are, that will Attend on Publick Ordinances, and hear the Word, and lay a great deal of Streſs on their going to Church, and are ready to Conclude, that becauſe they keep their Church, they ſhall be ſaved, when they make no Conſcience at all of keeping the reſt of the Day; if we trace them home from the Church to their Houſes, we ſhall hear nothing but Vain Worldly Frivolous Diſcourſes. How common is it after the Publick Work of the Day is over, to ſee Perſons Walking and Recreating themſelves in the Fields, or ſitting at their Doors, and ſpending their time in Diſcourſe about their Worldly Concerns, or which is worſe, in Vain Frothy Diſcourſes? And how many may we find in their Houſes at Cards inſtead of Reading the Bible, and other good Books? And how frequently may we ſee their Children, and the younger Perſons openly in the Streets at Play?

It hath been an Obſervation of ſome, that *where there is no due Conſcientious Care of a ſtrict Obſervation of the Sabbath, there*

there is but little of Religion there : And indeed, among many Perſons and Families, there is ſcarce any Face of Religion, than what appeareth only in their going to Church ; and but little more of Religion in their going to Church, than in their Dogs that go with them ; they conſider not the End nor Uſe of the Lords Day, nor Ordinances they attend upon, nor their Concern therein, but they only do it in a Cuſtomary Formal way ; and as for what Religion they ſeem to have, they put it on and off with their beſt Cloaths, having not the leaſt ſhew thereof all the Week after.

And ſome there are, concerning whom we may ſay, there is but little difference betwixt them and their labouring Beaſts in keeping the Sabbath, which conſiſteth only in their Reſt from their daily Work and Labours.

You that are Guilty hereof, you that ſeldom or never go any where to Attend on the Ordinances of God, or Hear a Sermon, but while others are Hearing, you are Idling at Home in your Houſes, it may be Reading a Romance or Walking the Fields, or Drinking in an Ale-Houſe or Tavern ; let me Reaſon with you, is there not a God that made you, and did not he make you to ſerve him? And is there nor a reck'ning Day coming, wherein God will call you to give an Account of what you have done, and how you have ſerved him ? And have not you Precious and Immortal Souls as well as others, that muſt be Saved or Damned to all Eternity? And what think you ? Let your own Conſciences ſpeak, do you think indeed you ſhall be Saved? You that will afford no time for the Service of God here, can you Rationally expect that God ſhall Save you hereafter ? No, it may be Writ over your Doors in Capital Letters, HERE LIVE HEATHENS, *the Lord have Mercy upon you* ; nay, you are worſe than Heathens, for they were ſtrict, ſome of them, in the Religious Worſhip of their Gods, ſo that they will riſe up in Judgment againſt you hereafter, who Live in the total neglect of the Worſhip of the Living and True God, and that in *England*, a Nation of ſo much Light.

You

You that are of the *poorer* ſort, I know you are ready to Excuſe your ſelves, and ſay you have not Cloaths fit to hear the Word in Publick Aſſemblies; but let me tell you, if you could find *Hearts* for the Service of God, God would find you Cloaths; it is Idleneſs, and your Luſts upon which you Spend Extravagantly that make you go in *Rags*, look Abroad and ſee, are there not others even your Neighbours under the ſame outward Circumſtances with you, that Labour under the ſame Diſadvantages with you in reſpect to Poverty, that through their Labour, Induſtry, Carefulneſs and Prudent Management of what they get, can provide for themſelves decent Apparel? Never think it ſhall be otherwiſe with you, as long as you Live ſuch Atheiſtical Lives: For the Curſe of God is upon you, and upon that little you have: Were you but really ſenſible of your Duty, the wants of your Souls, the Miſerable and Doleful State you are in, you would never make this your Excuſe; *your want of Cloaths*, Believe it, they are not your Totter'd and Ragged Cloaths, but your Baſe and Rotten Hearts that keep you from the Service of God. Hence it is you are ſo Ignorant, if one go amongſt you from Houſe to Houſe, to Examine you concerning the Principles of Religion, he ſhall find you as Ignorant, as if you had been Born amongſt the Heathen *Americans*. Ah *poor Creatures!* How are you to be pitied that Live Miſerably here, and are like to Live in unſpeakable and endleſs Miſery hereafter.

And you that do go to hear the Word, and attend on the publick Ordinances, and can afterward indulge your ſelves in Idleneſs, and a looſe licentious ſpending the reſt of the Day, that count when you come from Church the work of the Day is over. Do you think it reaſonable to put God off with two or three Hours of the Day, inſtead of the whole Day? Do you think God requires no more of you? Two or Three Hours work in a Day will not paſs with you for a Days work from your Servants, and Day-labourers. Let me ask you, and ſeriouſly Anſwer me; what thoughts do you think you ſhall have of ſuch Sabbath-time ſo ſpent when you come upon a Death-Bed?

Will not you wiſh then you had ſpent it better, and had been more ſtrict in the Obſervation thereof? Can you ſay, when you are idling and ſpending your time in frivolous Diſcourſes, now I am Sanctifying the Sabbath; this is the work of the Day, now I am ſerving God; now I am making Proviſion for my Soul, and preparing for Heaven. I am now giving all Diligence to make my Calling and Election ſure. I am now working out my Salvation. This ought to be the work of the Day, what ſay you to this? Speak Conſcience.

Is the Salvation of your Souls ſecured? Have you made your Peace with God? Have you an Intereſt in Chriſt, and are you fit to Die? If not, as certainly there is ground enough for you to doubt it, how dare you to triſle away the precious time which God hath given you in order hereunto? Is it not better, *let me appeal to your own Conſciences*, to ſpend the whole Day in holy and religious Exerciſes and Duties, and to be diligent and intenſe therein? Which think you is like to be the moſt gaining and thriving Chriſtian? Which bids faireſt for Heaven, which is like to have moſt Comfort upon a Death-Bed, he that conſcientiouſly ſpends the whole Day in the ſervice of God, or you that divide it, and give part to God, and the reſt to the Devil, that pretend to ſerve God one part of the Day, and ſerve the Devil the reſt of it?

After the ſame manner you train up your Children and Servants, taking no care of them, but let them prophane the Sabbath by Idleneſs, and playing even in the open Streets; you take no more care of them, than of your Beaſts, as if they had no Souls at all to ſave, you only feed them, and provide Neceſſaries for their Bodies; and this you do for your Beaſts: But what do you for their Souls? But know this, the Souls of your Children and Servants are committed to your Care, and at your Hands ſhall they be required. God hath given you Children to breed them up for him in his Fear, and if you do it not, at your peril it will be; the Bloud of their Souls will lie at your Doors; and you will certainly find God will have an heavy Charge againſt you hereafter for the neglect of your Duty herein. How frequently may we hear among them

them abominable Oaths, and Curſes, and prophane calling upon the Name of God, yea among your little Ones, as ſoon as they can begin to ſpeak, that is the Language you have taught them; inſtead of bringing them up for God, you train them up for the Devil. O Curſed Parents of ſuch Children! And O poor wretched Children of ſuch Parents! Your Children, if damned with you hereafter, will Curſe you to all Eternity. What will then be the Language of Hell, but bitter and rueful Complaints, dolorous Cries, and execrable Shriekings of ſuch Children in the ears of their Parents, gnaſhing of Teeth upon them? *O bloody and cruel Parents, you even you have brought us into this place of Torments! O what do we ſuffer now for profaning the Sabbath, for the Oaths that you taught us to Swear, and the abominable Practiſes we learn't from you! O had we had but religious Parents that might have given us a religious Education, that might have Inſtructed us, and brought us up in the fear of God, and have ſtrictly kept us from prophaning the Sabbath, Curſing and Swearing, and other abominable Evils, we might have eſcaped this place of Torments, and have now been yonder with the Saints in Glory! As for theſe abominable Evils for which we now ſuffer, and muſt ſuffer to all Eternity, we learnt them from you; you were our Example, and you upheld us therein. O Wretches that we are, that had ſuch Parents! Curſed you are your ſelves, and your Curſe you entail'd upon us. Curſed be the Day that ever we were Born.* O how will ſuch Cries and Shrieks as theſe make your Ears to Tingle, and pierce, and cut you to the very Heart. Not only the guilt of your own Sins, but of theirs alſo will lie heavy upon you, and tend exceedingly to heighten your Torments, and aggravate your Miſery. It is very probable, that it was upon this account that the *Rich Man* in Hell, which we read of in the Goſpel, was ſo much concern'd to have a Meſſenger diſpatch't from the Dead to his Brethren, to warn them that they might not come to that place of Torments, fearing leaſt their Company with him would make his Hell the hotter. Have any of you buried any Child, or Children, that you have thus brought up in Wickedneſs, and Profaneneſs, were there *Ghoſts* but permitted to appear to

you, with what a grim and fearful Countenance would they look upon you, and what ſad greetings would they viſit you withal! what hideous and doleful Out-cries would they make upon you, who have been the Inſtruments of bringing them into the World, and did take no care for the Salvation of their Souls? Would they tell you the Anguiſh and Agonies they are under, it would pierce you to the very Heart, and be enough to ſcare you out of your Wits. O let me beſeech you therefore, if you have any love to your Children, any love to their Souls, and any love to your own Souls, reſolve now to take another Courſe. Keep in your Children; ſuffer them not to ſpend the Lords Day in Idleneſs and Play; Inſtruct them, let them learn the Catechiſm, Read the Bible and other good Books; and be your ſelves an Example unto them.

To invalidate all this concerning ſo ſtrict an *Obſervation of the Sabbath*, I know many will Object, and ſay, we under the Goſpel are not required to keep the Sabbath ſo ſtrictly as the *Jews* were under the Law: For in the *Jewiſh* Sabbath, while they were in the Wilderneſs *they might kindle no Fire*, Exod. 35. *nor dreſs any Meat; and they were limited to a Sabbath-daies journey*, we are not ſo ſtrictly bound to keep our Sabbath, *the Lord's-Day*, but have more liberty under the Goſpel.

I Anſwer, we are not indeed bound ſo ſtrictly to the Letter, as they under the Law, that being a part of their Pedagogy, wherein they were to obſerve many Ceremonies, which we under the Goſpel are freed from; but we are more bound to a moral Reſt, and the ſpiritual Exerciſing our ſelves in religious Duties in our Sabbath under the Goſpel, in as much as we have now more Light, and our Priviledges are greater, and Ordinances more ſpiritual; ſo that we may not take more liberty than they licentiouſly to indulge our ſelves in a looſe Obſervation of the Sabbath, but in reſpect to the ſpiritual part of religious Worſhip, we are obliged to keep it more ſtrictly. But let me a little reaſon with you.

1. From the *neceſſity* of a ſtrict Obſervation thereof. What is this, but as a *Market-day*, or a *Fair-day* for our Souls, wherein we ſhould be treating for Heaven, and making

making Proviſion for our Souls in another World, and in order hereunto we are to wait on God in his Ordinances, and all Duties both Publick and Private; we ought indeed to make Religion our buſineſs every Day, and a vein of Religion ſhould run through every thing we do; the Glory of God, and the great concerns of our Souls ſhould be uppermoſt in our Hearts every Day, and all the Day long, but this Day God hath ſet apart on purpoſe for his ſolemn Worſhip, and for Soul-work; and as all time is Precious, ſo Sabbath-time eſpecially. 'Tis your Tryal for Eternity, and according as you ſpend it here, you are like to ſpend an Eternity hereafter.

You that plead againſt ſo ſtrict an Obſervation of the Sabbath, as if there was no ſuch need of it, what ſay you? Are your Souls ſufficiently provided for? Have you the truth of Grace, and have you Grace enough? Have you a Pardon Sealed, have you your Evidences for Heaven clear, are you fit to Die, if you ſhould never have a Sabbath more, what ſay your own Conſciences to this? You can riſe early in the Morning, and ſet up late in the Night on other Daies, and ſpend the whole time about your worldly Buſineſs and Imployments, and herein you will plead a neceſſity, and ſay, this Buſineſs muſt be done, this is my Imployment, and that on which my livelihood depends, and I muſt be diligent herein; but have you not, every one of you, more reaſon to ſay, when the Sabbath comes; This is a Day for the concerns of my Soul, and my Soul muſt be ſaved, or I am a loſt undone miſerable Man to all Eternity? Let me this Day be diligent in the ſervice of God, in order to the Salvation of my Soul, and improve to the utmoſt every oportunity I have, while I am free from the Incumbrances of the World which I have on other Duties, can I ſpend too much time for God, and my precious Soul?

2. The *excellencies* of a holy ſtrict Obſervation thereof, 'tis an *embleme* and an *earneſt* to the Saints of their keeping a never ending Sabbath with God in Heaven. We are on this Day called aſide from our worldly Imployments, and Buſineſs to converſe with God, and have Communion with him, without ſo much Interruption as on other Daies.

Daies. Gracious Souls have had the Experience thereof, and cannot allow themſelves in any thing, that is not ſuitable to the work of the Day, that may interrupt them in the ſervice of God. Beſides the Publick work of the Day, they know of what uſe good Conference, Meditation, reading the Word of God, and other good Books, and prayer are unto them, and what they have gained thereby. It is a Heaven upon Earth unto them, while they have had Communion with God in thoſe Duties; and though they may be ſometimes wearied in Duty, yet they are never weary of Duty. But as for you, that think two or three Hours ſpent in the publick Worſhip of the Day to be enough, and can afterward allow your ſelves in Idleneſs, and carnal vain and frothy Diſcourſes, and as concerning the ſpending the whole Day in religious Exerciſes, are ready to ſay with thoſe in the Prophet *Malachi*, *Behold what a weariſomneſs is it*? believe me, I muſt tell you, you are none of the Saints and People of God; but if you live and die in the preſent State, your Portion will be with Devils, and damned Spirits, never flatter your ſelves any of you with a fond Conceit that you ſhall go to Heaven; for if you cannot ſpend one whole Day in holy and religious Exerciſes here, how would you ſpend an Eternity in Heaven, where are nothing elſe. Heaven would be a very burden to you.

And as for thoſe of you that do make a more than ordinary *Profeſſion*, that are not ſo conſciencious as you ought to be herein, you may do well, to queſtion whether you have indeed the truth of Grace; certainly if you have, it is at a very low Ebb, and it is no wonder if waſtings, witherings and decaies, do viſibly appear upon you.

It hath been obſerved that the Proteſtants in *France*, that have been ſo long under a ſevere Perſecution, have heretofore been deeply guilty concerning this matter, and may not this amongſt others be one main reaſon wherefore God is now ſo ſeverely contending with them, and that they have been ſo long under the ſmarting Rod, may not this be the cauſe, that their ſolemn Aſſemblies have been ſo long broken up? Let *England* and *Holland* alſo beware; have

have they not cauſe to fear leaſt they fall under the ſame Fate, and drink of the ſame Cup, who generally take ſo little notice of the *ſtrict Obſervation of the Lord's day.*

To conclude this Head, the ordinary prophaning of the Sabbath, being that which directly ſtriketh, not only at the Power, but the very form of Godlineſs, is that which is an *Inlet* to, and attended with the perpetration of the moſt abominable Evils. Men caſt off the fear of God, and God judicially gives them up to their own Luſts; and it hath been obſerved that Malefactors who have been Arraigned and Condemned for Robbery and Murder, and ſuch-like horrible Wickedneſſes, ſome of them that have been under Convictions, when they have been brought to the place of Execution, have openly and ſolemnly declared that the breaking and prophaning the Sabbath, was the firſt occaſion that drew them to a lewd and vitious courſe of Life, which muſt end in ſo ſhameful a Death, and therefore have exhorted all to take warning by them, and to be ſtrict in the obſervation of the Sabbath.

5. *Drunkenneſs* is another Sin which reigns much in the Nation. This is a Sin that exceedingly debaſeth the noble Faculties of the Soul, that eclipſeth the Reaſon, and maketh Men worſe than the bruitiſh Creatures, it enervates the ſtrength of the Body, generates Diſeaſes, ſhortens Life, and overturns the whole *oeconomy* of Nature, and commonly brings Shame, Diſgrace and Poverty; but who can enumerate the Evils that owe their Original to this of Drunkenneſs? When Drunkenneſs leads the Van, troops of Evils and Miſchiefs follow in the Arrear; hence come Strifes, Contention, Duels, Slaughters, even thoſe Sins that Men would be aſhamed, or afraid to commit when Sober, they are in danger to fall into when overtaken with this Sin, being prompted thereto through the violent and impetuous hurry of their Luſts, and the Temptations of the Devil; for their reaſon being turned out of Door, they lay themſelves open to the Temptations of the Devil, to perpetrate whatſoever he Tempts them unto, *I have read of a remarkable Story of a young Man, whom the Devil tempted to kill his Father, and lye with his Mother; no, ſaith the young Man, I dare not do that, then the*

the Devil tempted him to make himſelf drunk, and this he did, and when he had made himſelf drunk, he both killed his Father, and lay with his Mother.

Some there are that are ſcarce ever in their Element, but when they are in a Tavern, or ſitting upon an Ale-bench, Carrowzing and Singing, and debauching themſelves, and then they give rains to their predominate Luſts, and ordinarily then they ſhew themſelves, what they are according to the predominancy of the Luſts; ſome in Quarreling and Contentions, others in contriving Villanies, ſome in obſcene Debaucheries, others in deriding and ſcoffing at Religion, and the power of Godlineſs, and Reproaching, and vilifying the Saints and Servants of God, as the Pſalmiſts complains, *Pſal.* 69. 12. *that he was the Song of the Drunkards.*

You that are guilty of this Sin, not unawares overtaken, and ſurprized thereby; but ordinarily give your ſelves up to the ſatisfying this Luſt, that indulge your ſelves in rioting, intemperance, and drunkenneſs, what if while you are Merry and Jovial, you ſhould ſee an hand writing againſt you upon the Wall, as *Belſhazar* did while he was *quafing* and *drinking Wine*, the ſight whereof made *the joynts of his loins looſed, and his Knees to ſmite one againſt another?* Why there is an hand writing alſo againſt you, and that very plain, that you need none to read it, and interpret it to you, as *Belſhazar* did, look into the 29 of *Deut.* 19, and there you will ſee it; *And it come to paſs when he heareth the words of this Curſe, that he bleſs himſelf in his Heart, ſaying, I ſhall have peace tho' I walk in the imagination of mine Heart, to add drunkenneſs to thirſt*, ver. 20. *The Lord will not ſpare him; but then the anger of the Lord, and his jealouſie ſhall ſmoke againſt that man, and all the curſes that are written in the Book ſhall lye upon him, and the Lord ſhall blot out his name from under Heaven.* O look on this, is not this your Caſe? Are not you the Perſons againſt whom God ſtirs up himſelf in ſo terrible a manner, can you read it and not tremble? Certainly you have as much reaſon to tremble as *Belſhazar* had, Can there be a more fearful Commination than this, can you find a more dreadful place than this in all the Bible, even this where-

in

in are included all the Curſes of God? God will come forth againſt ſuch in the terribleneſs of his Wrath, and who knows what that is, according as his Power is, ſo is his Wrath? O that this place of Scripture, that breaths out nothing but Curſes, Wrath and Vengeance might have always a deep impreſſion on your Hearts, that Conſcience might be always alarming you with it, and ſounding it in your Ears! O think how ſoon the caſe may be altered with you! You that are now Quaffing, carrouzing and drinking your merry Cups, and indulging your ſenſual Luſts, and will not be reformed, 'tis but a little time, and you muſt bid adieu to all your pleaſant Cups, and ſweet Draughts, you muſt take up your lodging in everlaſting Flames, where you will have nothing to drink, but the dregs of the Wine of the Wrath of God without mixture, nothing to drink, but of the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimſtone, where you will be as ſo many burning Coals kindled by the Wrath of God; and O what throbbings and pantings of Heart will there then be? O the extream and inſatiable Thirſt, that you will then be tormented with to all Eternity, and not ſo much as a drop of cold Water to be had to cool your parched burning Tongues; if you but read, 1 *Cor.* 6. 9. 10. you will find there your ſelves reckoned up by the Apoſtle in *that black Catalogue* of thoſe that ſhall be excluded and ſhut out of Heaven; and what place remains for you then but Hell?

Some there are, ſo prodigiouſly wicked, as not to content themſelves with their own drinking to exceſs, but will have a deſign upon others, to make them drunk, and in order hereunto, after they have drunk ſufficiently, begin their *drinking of Healths*, as a plauſible way to bring about their deſign; you that are guilty hereof, read *Habbak.* 2. 15. *Wo unto him that giveth his Neighbour drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makeſt him drunken alſo, that thou mayeſt look on their nakedneſs.*

Some there are, who through the ſtrength of their natural Conſtitution, and their frequent accuſtoming themſelves to drinking to exceſs, can ſpend a whole day in drinking *to exceſs*, and yet not be overcome therewith;

who are ready to plead for themſelves, and think themſelves excuſeable, as being not guilty of the Sin of drunkenneſs; but let ſuch read, *Iſa.* 5. 11. *Wo unto them that riſe up early in the Morning, that they may follow ſtrong drink, that continue until Night, till Wine inflame*, ver. 22. *Wo unto them that are mighty to drink Wine, Men of ſtrength to mingle ſtrong drink*; though it hath not that effect upon you to inebriate and intoxicate you, yet you are actually guilty of Intemperance, and Exceſs, and virtually of the Sin of Drunkenneſs. Some of you are ready to boaſt hereof, and challenge one another, to try who can drink moſt; you glory in that which is your Shame, and againſt which the great God hath pronounced a Wo.

In ſome places they are accuſtomed to have their appointed Meetings, which they call their *merry Meetings*; wherein they ſpend their time in drinking, and dancing, rioting, and wantonneſs; and this among them is termed good Neighbourhood: But however they account them, they are in plain Terms, no other than the *Devil's Meetings*.

As the Devil hath his ſet, and appointed times of Meetings among the Witches, (*as ſome of them have confeſſed*) wherein he hath appeared in a viſible Shape to them: So theſe Meetings of yours are his alſo, though he appeareth not openly to you in a viſible Shape as to them, but more cloſely, and ſecretly; applying himſelf to you more Spiritually, in tempting, and inticeing you to Sin, and ſtiring up your Luſts within you; you are his Vaſſals, and Slaves, and in his Work and Service are you imployed, as much as ever a Servant was imployed about his Maſters Work; and believe it, as the Church and People of God do Aſſemble themſelves together for the Worſhip of God, whereby they maintain the viſible Kingdom of Chriſt upon the Earth, and aſſert his royal Authority: So you in your Meetings do ſerve and gratifie the Devil, and help to uphold his Kingdom; for he is the God of this World, that worketh in the Hearts of the *Children of Diſobedience*. *I remember I have read of a good Woman, that happened accidentally to be among ſuch at a Meeting, and ſhe*

became

became poſſeſſed with the Devil, and a day being ſet apart to be kept for her, by ſeeking of God in ſolemn Faſting and Prayer, the Devil ſpake in her, and it being then told him, that ſhe was none of his, and demanding of him, wherefore he did poſſeſs her, he anſwered, he found her among his, and ſo took her for his own, if ſhe was not, what did ſhe do among them. Let this be a warning to all you that are young Perſons, that have had a religious Education; beware that you are not by any carnal Inticements perſwaded to go amongſt them; for the Devil, that black Prince of Darkneſs, is not only preſent among them, but he preſides there, to aſſiſt, abet, and encourage his in theſe works of his Kingdom of Darkneſs; therefore as you would not be taken for the *Devils Children*, Aſſociate not your ſelves with them; for thereby you go out of God's way, and you are on the Devil's Ground, you are amongſt his curſed crew, and about his work, and as you would not ſpend an Eternity hereafter with them in weeping, wailing, and gnaſhing of Teeth, do not ſpend your time with them now in Drinking, Singing and Dancing. I know young Perſons, even of religious Parents, where there is not a Principle of Grace, are in great Danger to be inſnared by Temptations of this kind as being pleaſing, and ſuitable to the Fleſh: But whoever you are, who are inclined thereunto, let me beſeech you to take this as a ſerious warning to you, and avoid ſuch Meetings as you would Hell it ſelf. Read 24. *Mat.* 48. 49, 50, 51. *'Tis a dangerous thing to be among them in their Meetings, though you are not drunken with them.*

If your Fleſh prompt you with an eager deſire to go amongſt ſuch, to be merry, and jolly with them, and the Devil, together with your own baſe Hearts are ready to argue, why what harm is there in it, to ſpend a little time in Mirth; ſuch, and ſuch are there, and why may not we? Think with your ſelves then, but would it not be much better to ſtay at home, and ſpend that time in Prayer, Reading, and Meditation, would not that turn to a better account; if notwithſtanding you are overcome, and will go; make a ſtand, think with

your ſelves in the way, whither are we now going, to ſerve God, or the Devil, are we now bound for Heaven or Hell? What account ſhall we give of this time we are now going about to ſpend? If yet notwithſtanding you will not return, but on you will go; think then *if you can*, for if the foregoing Conſiderations could not overbear your Luſts, to put a ſtop unto you, I have but little hope that you will entertain any ſerious Conſiderations there; yet, I ſay, think if you can when amongſt them, ſhould we be willing to take our Lot and Portion with theſe hereafter, we come here to Drink, and Dance, and be Merry with them, but can we be content to be damned with them hereafter? After you are returned, then ſeriouſly think with your ſelves, our Fleſh hath had the ſweet of this Pleaſure, but O there is a Sting behind, we have ſatisfied our ſenſual Luſts, but will it not be bitterneſs and ſorrow in the end; theſe are ſinful Pleaſures, that we muſt repent of, or be damned for, what comfort can we take now in a ſerious Reflexion upon them, now they are paſt and gone, but how ſhall we look upon our time thus ſpent when we ſhall come upon a Death-bed?

Now if notwithſtanding all this propoſed to your ſerious Conſideration, you will not reform, not break off from ſuch Meetings as theſe, let me leave one word with you, and that is a dreadful one, It is to be feared, you are ſome of thoſe that ſhall be numbred amongſt them hereafter, and that you ſhall have your Lot with them in Everlaſting Burnings.

You that have any love to your Souls, whoſe Conſciences are awakened, and have any ſenſe of the evil of Sin, I beſeech you, indulge not your ſenſual Appetites, deny the unreaſonable cravings of your Luſts, beware of frequenting Play-houſes, or any Meetings that may tend to Corrupt, and Debauch you; be not enticed by your carnal Friends and Companions; ſhake them off. Take the advice of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 13. 13. *Let us walk honeſtly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenneſs*, &c. Take the caution our Saviour gives in *Luke* 21. 34. *Take heed to your ſelves leaſt at any time your Hearts be overcharged with ſurfeiting, and drunkenneſs, and cares of this Life, and ſo that day come upon you unawares.* If you would not be overtaken

taken with the Sin of Drunkenneſs, avoid all occaſions that may lead thereunto; if you would not be taken by the Hook, nibble not at the Bait, for if *Occaſion* and *Temptation* meet together with a predominate Luſt, it is an hundred to one but you are taken.

6. The laſt Sin I ſhall mention is that of *Uncleanneſs, Fornication, and Adultery*, which is directly forbidden in the ſeventh Commandment, in *Levit.* 20. 10. *Thoſe that did commit this ſin were to be put to Death*, and in *Mal.* 3. 5. *God ſaith he will be a ſwift witneſs againſt the Adulterers.* And *Heb.* 13. 4. *Whoremongers and Adulterers, God will judge*, yet how inſatiable are ſome in their vile Affections and Luſts, as thoſe the Apoſtle deſcribes, in *Eph.* 4. 19. *Who being paſt feeling, have given themſelves over unto laſciviouſneſs, to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs.* This is a Luſt that commonly in an eſpecial manner, *when it gets the Aſcendant*, commands all other Luſts, and makes them ſubſervient to Adminiſter to it, and bids defiance to all others that ſhall controul it.

How many *Gallants* are there in the *City*, that are meerly Epicures, that give themſelves up wholly to Voluptuouſneſs, and all manner of ſenſual Pleaſures, that go to the Play-houſe, from the Play-houſe to the Tavern, and from the Tavern to the Whore-houſe: And after this manner do generally ſpend their time, that make this the very Buſineſs, and end of their Life, contriving Incentives to ſtimulate their exorbitant Luſts. And in the *Country*, where there are not Temptations of this kind, what Projects and Contrivances do Luſt in the Hearts of Men find out, to gratifie it ſelf, in revelling, riotous Meetings, and wanton Dances, in obſcene Diſcourſes, laſcivious Ballads, and amorous Romances, all which tend to the debauching of Youth; and how many young Men and Woman are there, and even ſome that have been Hopeful, and promiſing, that by the occaſion hereof have been Debauch't, ſtaind their Reputation, and have been a blot to their Family, an Heart-breaking to their Relations, and have ruined both Body and Soul?

Moreover, others there are who tho' they ſtand in a *Conjugal Relation*, which God hath appointed as a means to regulate

regulate our inordinate Affections, yet will not ſatisfie themſelves with that lawful Society, but violate and tranſgreſs that matrimonial Bond, and alienate the Propriety, and invade the Prerogative of others; like thoſe in *Jerem.* 5. 8. *They were as fed Horſes in the morning every one neighed after his neighbours Wife*, which Sin of *Adultery*, is a Sin that is highly aggravated in many reſpects.

You that are Guilty hereof, let your Conſciences ſpeak, are not you really convinced that they are groſs and moſt abominable Evils that you Live in? And know you not how the Wrath of God is revealed againſt ſuch in his Word, in moſt terrible Threatnings, and that if you Live and Die in theſe Sins, you will be Eternally Damned? Let me appeal to you, do not you feel ſometimes ſome Terrible Pangs and Gripings of Conſcience, that make you even to Tremble? How is it you dare then to continue in this wretched Courſe of Life? Or is your Conſcience ſeared as with an Hot Iron, and paſt feeling? Do you Flatter your ſelves that theſe are only Infirmities of the Fleſh, and ſo you may have a Pardon of Courſe? No, if you Live and Die Impenitently, I can tell you what your Doom ſhall be, and you may Believe it to be as True and certain, as if you were now ſtanding at the Judgment Seat, and hearing it irreverſibly proceeding out of the Mouth of your Judge; Look into Eph. 5. 5. *For this we know, that no Whore-monger, nor Unclean Perſon, nor Covetuous Man who is an Idolater, hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Chriſt and of God*, and Rev. 21. 18. *but the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and Murderers, and Whoremongers, and Sorcerers and Idolaters, and all Liers ſhall have their Part in the Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimſtone, which is the ſecond Death, and* Rev. 22. 15. and in 1 Cor. 6. 9. *Be not deceived, neither Fornicators nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate*, &c. *ſhall Inherit the Kingdom of God.* This Word of God is that by which you ſhall be judged, by which you muſt ſtand, or fall at the Great Day of Judgment; and now cannot your own Conſciences bring in a Black Bill of Indictment againſt you, Arraign and Condemn you, what ſay you, *Guilty or not Guilty?* Are not you the very Perſons intimated here, as much

much as if you ſhould ſee your Names Written here *in this black Bill, or dead Liſt ?* Believe it, you will find it to be True, when once the Grim Sergeant Death comes to Arreſt you, and Summons you to appear before the Judge, to receive your Doom in another World.

What aile you, do you make light of *Damnation?* Are you content to be Damned? Have you made a Covenant with Death, and an Agreement with Hell? Do you ſay, take Heaven who will for us, ſo we may have the Satisfacti- of our Luſts, we will run the Hazzard of our Damnation? And will you indeed have whatever your Luſts do Crave for, and Indulge your Fleſh in all manner of Licentiouſneſs for a little time here, tho' you are Damned for it, and muſt lie Roaring in the Flames of Hell to all Eternity? *O horrible Madneſs ! O extream Folly !*

But is there not yet hope concerning you, at leaſt ſome of you? Why may you not yet be Pluck't as Brands out of the Burning, even now before Hell Fire is actually Kindled upon you? O then it will be too late! Let me earneſtly Beſeech you in the Words of the Apoſtle, 2 Tim. 2. 22. *Flee alſo Youthful Luſts, but follow Righteouſneſs, Faith, Charity.* Avoid all Incentives to your Luſts; do not ſatisfie them in their unreaſonable Cravings; do not add Fewel to the Fire, nor Oil to the Flame; pamper not your fleſh; cut it ſhort, give it no more than its allowance, whenever Temptations are offered; and you are prompted by your Fleſh to cloſe with them, ſay with Joſeph, *How can I do this great Wickedneſs and Sin againſt God ?* Shall I do this and Damn my Soul, how ſhall I for this little ſhort Pleaſure lie burning in Hell to all Eternity? *I have Read of a Young Virgin, that being tempted by a luſtful Young Man to the Act of Uncleanneſs, ſhe gave him this Anſwer, if ſaith ſhe, you will grant me one thing I deſire, I will then ſatisfie your Demand; he told her he would. Then ſaid ſhe, I deſire you would put your Finger for a whole Hour to burn in this Candle, O ſaith he, that is unreaſonable, it is True ſaith ſhe, but you ask me a Requeſt more unreaſonable, to ſatisfie you in a thing for which I ſhall not only burn an Hour, but burn for ever in the unquenchable Fire of Hell !*

And

And let not the Conſideration of Secrecy by any Means prevail with you, in that no Mortal Eye ſees you ; but ſay, how cloſely and clandeſtinely ſoever I may commit this Sin, the All ſeeing Eye of God is upon me, who will bring all my ſecret Works of Darkneſs to light.

But Alas ! I doubt all that I have ſaid, or much more that might be ſaid, will have but little Influence on the moſt of Men that do give themſelves up to their own Hearts Luſts ; and the moſt powerful Arguments that can be made uſe of, will be amongſt ſome but of little force ; for as touching the *Deiſts*, they will deride and ſcorn them, and as for others, their Luſts will Controul and Confront them. 'Tis a wonderful Conſideration, that Luſt ſhould be ſo Strong and Rampant in the Hearts of Men, and that the Law of Sin is of that force, that it will not be check't and reſtrain'd by the Law of God ; but will break forth notwithſtanding all the threatnings God denounceth, and Judgments he executeth. One would think, that if we tell Men, that if they will not be reclaim'd, but continue in their ſinful Courſe of Life, they are undone to all Eternity, there is no hope for them, they muſt count upon nothing but to be Damned ; and if we reaſon with them, and ask them how they think they ſhall be able to endure the Wrath of God, and lye burning in the Flames of his Vengeance to all Eternity ? I ſay, one would think the Conſideration hereof, ſhould put an effectual Check to the Law of Sin ; and tho' it cannot Mortifie, yet hinder Sin from breaking forth into Act, yet we ſee it far otherwiſe. Neither will Men be deterred from this Sin now under Conſideration, tho' God ſhews the Remarks of his Diſpleaſure in this Life, in Viſiting them after that manner, that they may Read their Sin in their Puniſhment. Yea, at length ſome thro' their long accuſtoming themſelves thereunto grow Impudent, and go about to Palliate and Extenuate Sins of this Nature, as being ſuch as *David*, one of the beſt of Men, and *Solomon* one of the Wiſeſt fell into : Every one ſay they, have their failings, and this is ours, the Lord have Mercy upon us, we are all Sinners ; but Alas ! How do ſuch deceive themſelves, not diſtinguiſhing between the Saints

Saints falling into a Sin, and their wallowing in it with Delight and Complacency? They Read and Hear of the Saints Fallings, but they are Strangers to their Repentance; they little think what they coſt them, and what is their Grief, Sorrow, and brokenneſs of Heart for them.

Thus I have preſented you with a ſhort Catalogue of ſome of thoſe *abominable Evils and Immoralities*, whereof Multitudes in this Nation are *Guilty*. I have ſhewn you alſo what their miſerable State and Condition is; how the Wrath of God is revealed againſt ſuch, that they are already under the Curſe of God; and if they Die in an Impenitent State, they muſt be caſt into Hell, and lye under the Weight of the Wrath and Vengeance of an angry God to all Eternity.

Now *Reader*, let me beſeech thee ſeriouſly to conſider before thou readeſt any further whether this be not thy caſe; doſt not thou lye under the guilt of any of theſe Sins, and liveſt thou not in the Practice of any of them? If thou doſt, know this, that without Repentance and Reformation thou art an undone Man; thou art caſt, and condemned by the Word of God, if thou haſt read thus far, thou haſt e're this time read thine own Doom. Read it not, as if it were ſome tragical Hiſtory, wherein thou art not concerned. I have ſhewed thee what the Word of God, by which thou muſt be judged, ſaith concerning thee; do not queſtion, and heſitate about the Truth and Certainty thereof, and ſay theſe things may be ſo, and Peradventure they may not be ſo; believe the Word of God to be infallibly Certain, and undoubtedly True, Heaven and Earth ſhall paſs away, but not one jot or tittle of the Word of God ſhall fall to the Ground unfulfilled. God hath told us expreſly, over and over, that without Regeneration, Repentance and Faith, there is no Salvation; Flatter not thy ſelf therefore with Hopes that thou ſhalt be ſaved, as long as thou continueſt in this courſe of Life: For if thou liveſt and dieſt in this State, I can aſſure thee God will not ſave thee; nay, to ſpeak with an Holy Reverence, God cannot ſave thee, for he who is Truth it ſelf will certainly be true to his own Word. Say not with thy ſelf, I am for the preſent time; if theſe things

of the World to come be true, they are a great way off, who knows when they will be? If this be thy Conceit and Imagination, let me tell thee, they may be nearer than thou art aware of, the Judge ſtandeth at the Door, and Death, God's Serjeant may be nearer thy Heels than thou Imagineſt; it may on a ſudden look in at thy Windows, and break open thy Doors upon thee, Surprize thee, and Arreſt thee, and bring thee before his Tribunal; God may ſay this Night ſhall thy Soul be required of thee, and then ſhall thy eternal State be determined; and who can conceive the Anguiſh, Horror, and Perplexity that thy Soul ſhall be immediately overwhelmed with? Then thou wilt be ſenſible of what thou haſt Eternally loſt; and in ſome meaſure of what thou muſt for ever endure; and as for the full compleating of thy eternal Miſery, it will not be long before the Reſurrection and the great day of Judgment, when thy Body and Soul ſhall be reunited, to ſuffer together as they have ſinned together. I beſeech thee therefore, firmly believe what the Word of God ſaith concerning theſe things without the leaſt doubting: And do not put off Repentance and Reformation until hereafter; thou canſt not promiſe thy ſelf one Hour more to live, what madneſs then is it to promiſe thy ſelf an hereafter Repentance? Doubtleſs there are many Thouſands ſuch now in Hell, that couldſt thou ſpeak with them, would tell thee that time was, they were of thy mind. Beſides, if in the reading hereof thou art convinced of thy Sins, and the Danger thou art in, and wilt not forthwith repent, and ſet about a work of Reformation, who knows but God may give thee up to hardneſs of Heart, and a ſearedneſs of Conſcience, *and ſwear in his Wrath that thou ſhalt never enter into his reſt.* O fear leaſt this ſhould be thy Caſe, Read 1 *Prov.* 24. to the end; turn to it and Read it.

Yet further to alarm and awaken your Conſciences, let me propoſe to you a few Interrogatories; and as you are rational Creatures act reaſon herein, and let Conſcience give in its Anſwer.

1. Did not God Create you to this very end, that you might ſerve him, and Honour and Glorifie him, did not

not God give you rational Souls, endued with excellent and noble Faculties, that you might be capable of knowing and injoying him?

2. Is not God the great Soveraign, Rector, and Legiſlator of the World, whoſe ſole Right and Prerogative it is to give Laws to the Creatures he hath made?

3. Can his Laws, who is Holineſs it ſelf, be otherwiſe than Holy, Juſt, Righteous and Good?

4. Is it not, not only your Duty, but your Intereſt, Advantage, Honour and Happineſs to ſerve him? His Service is perfect Freedom, and his very Work is Wages.

5. Is it not altogether reaſonable, that you who are his Creatures ſhould ſerve him who is your Creator, and your Benefactor, who Maintains you, and Provides for you, is it not all the reaſon in the world you ſhould ſerve him when you are at his finding?

6. What have you done ever ſince you came into the World; have you ſerved, and honoured him, have you not rather lived in an open Rebellion againſt him, have not you ſlighted his Royal Authority, and bid defiance to Heaven; have not yon ſet up your Luſts in oppoſition to Gods Laws; and have not you ſometimes for the ſake of your Luſts, wiſhed in your Hearts, that the Laws of God that do oppoſe and controul them could be expunged, and razed out of the Bible? Speak Conſcience, hath it not been even ſo?

7. Can you rationally imagine that you ſhall after all this eſcape unpuniſhed? Do you think that the great God will put up theſe Affronts at your Hands; will God ſuffer his Laws to be broken by ſinful Wretches, and not vindicate the Equity, and maintain the Honour thereof? Judge you your ſelves, can it be conſiſtent with the greatneſs of his Majeſty, his Holineſs and Juſtice?

8. Do you think, that becauſe God is a God of Patience and bears long with you, that he will always bear, is there not a Day coming, when all the Threatnings denounced againſt impenitent Sinners ſhall be executed to the full, and God will ſhew himſelf to be a God of infinite Juſtice?

9. Have not you immortal Souls that muſt be adjudged by the great God to eternal Bliſs and Felicity, or eternal

Wo and Miſery; to Heaven or Hell, that muſt be ſaved or damned?

10. What thoughts will you have when you come to lie upon a Death-Bed? What of your Souls? Whither they are going? And what of the time that you have miſpent? When your cold Death-ſweats are upon you, your Spirits languiſhing, your Hearts panting, and you are gaſping for Breath, and your Friends ſtanding round about you with Cries and Tears, when you ſee there is no hope, but die you muſt, no Phyſician can cure, no Cordial can help, if Conſcience then ſhall flie in your Faces, and repreſent to you the abominableneſs and guilt of your Sins, and fill you with the ſenſe of the Wrath of God for them, O what horror will then ſeize your Spirits, what a frightful Countenance and what gaſtly looks will you then appear withal? O what tremblings will there then be of your Joints, what convulſions of your Members, what trepidations of Heart? O what Agonies will you then be in, and in what hideous Cries and Groans will you vent the anguiſh and bitterneſs of your Souls, and what an eſtuation and burning will the perplexed Paſſions of your Souls kindle in your Spirits, when you ſhall apprehend that Hell from beneath is moved for you, and that the Devils, thoſe malicious Spirits, are waiting in your Chambers for their Prey, even to ſeize your Souls preſently upon their *exit* out of your Bodies, to bring them before your terrible Judge? This to my knowledge have been the caſe of ſome; and O what a Rueful and Heart-affecting Sight and Spectacle is it! I know not a more diſmal Sight in this World, than to ſee ſuch poor Creatures breathing out their laſt: 'Tis the foretaſte and Prologue of the Torments they are going to.

11. How will you be able to ſtand at the Judgment Seat of Chriſt, when all your Sins ſhall meet you there, and ſtare you in the Face, and your Conſciences ſhall be as a Thouſand Witneſſes againſt you? O how will you ſtand trembling then before your angry Judge, how will you look when you ſhall hear that irreverſible Sentence paſs upon you, *Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* When you ſhall

ſhall ſee the Smoke of the bottomleſs Pit aſcending up, and your ſelves on the very brink thereof, ready to be hurried in with a Vengeance; O who can conceive the lamentable and hideous Cries and Shrieks of poor damned Creatures, when they are caſting down into that place of Torments?

12. How will you be able to lie in that Lake that burns with Fire and Brimſtone in thoſe unſpeakable Torments?

Conſider the *extremity* of them; could you imagine all the Torments that ever were invented, or can be inflicted on the Body, by Fire, the Rack, Strapado, or any other Inſtruments of Cruelty, they all came ſhort of the Torments of the damned: Did thoſe excruciating Diſeaſes, the Gout, Stone, Strangury, Collick meet all together in one Body, in the greateſt extremity, the ſtouteſt Spirit would be forced to cry out, and Roar under the Torture thereof; yet all this is nothing to the Torture that the damned in Hell muſt lie under; but the ſufferings of the Soul being the more noble Part, will be greater than the ſufferings of the Body, and the ſenſe of the loſs will be the Aggravation of all; the ſenſe of the loſs of God, of Chriſt, of Heaven, the Joies and Glory thereof, is that which will unſpeakably aggravate their Miſery. In fine, that which poor damned Souls muſt endure, is that which the infinite Power, and infinite Juſtice of an Almighty incenſed God doth inflict in infinite Wrath; and what Creature can conceive what that is? Beſides, we may imagine, that the Devils, thoſe cruel Fiends will do the utmoſt they can to torment poor damned Wretches, in their Bodies, by torturing them; and in their Souls, by upbraiding, and inſulting over them; and their own Conſciences will be as a Worm continually gnawing upon them.

Conſider the *Eternity* of theſe Torments, *O Eternity Eternity!* Were it poſſible for you to ſurvive the enduring of all the Tortures that ever were invented, and can be inflicted upon you, as alſo all the moſt dolorous Pains of the moſt racking Diſeaſes, you would not for the whole World be hired to endure them ſo much as one day; what will you

you do then to bear the endleſs Torments of Hell? Altho' they were unſpeakable in Reſpect to the Extremity of them, yet theſe muſt bear you to all Eternity; when you have been in Hell enduring of them Ten Thouſand times Ten Thouſands of Millions of Millions of Ages, you are no more at an end of your Torments than when you were at firſt caſt into them. *O the Conſideration of Eternity amongſt poor Damned Wretches, that are under an Extremity of Torments, which they muſt bear without Intermiſſion or Remiſſion: is that which will Amaze and Confound them, and fill Hell with moſt hideous Roarings.*

I hope by this time you that Read this, are convinced of your ſinful, undone, and miſerable State by Nature, and are ready to cry out, O what ſhall we do to be ſaved! Who of us can dwell in Everlaſting Burnings? But if any of you yet remain Stupid, Senſeleſs, and are ready to make light of all that hath been ſaid; let me propoſe to you a few Queries, wherein I ſhall apply my ſelf unto you in a plain Repreſentation thereof unto your Senſes, as being loath from my very Heart, that any of you ſhould be Damned; hoping that ſome Argument and Motive or other might prevail with you.

1. What if you had been with the *Children of Iſrael*, when God gave the Law on Mount *Sinai*, if you had ſeen and heard what they did, *the Thundrings and Lightnings, the Noiſe of the Trumpet, the Mountain Smoaking, and on Fire, together with a terrible Quaking*; which was ſo dreadful, *that* Moſes *himſelf did exceedingly fear and quake*; what thoughts would you have had then of the tremendous Majeſty of God that you affront, and the Laws of God promulgated in ſo Terrible a manner, that you break and violate? And if God did appear ſo Terribly in his Majeſty when he gave the Law, how Terribly think you will he appear, when he ſhall come to call Sinners to an account, and take Vengeance upon them for breaking his Laws?

2. What if ſome of your Companions, not long ſince with you, that are now amongſt the Damned, ſhould be permitted to come to you, and tell you what they ſuffer; ſhould their *Ghoſts* appear to you in a gaſtly and frightful manner, and tell you what a dreadful Caſe they are in:

Should

Should they bring to you News from Hell, and ſad Tydings, from another World: Should they tell you how tremendous the Majeſty of God is, how ſevere his Juſtice, how Terrible his Wrath, how Cruel the *curſed Fiends* are to them amongſt whom they dwell; ſhould they cry out unto you? O you little think what we ſuffer now for the Sins we Committed when we were upon the Earth; yea, for thoſe Sins we Committed with you, for our Curſing and Swearing, Prophaning the Sabbath, and for our Drunkenneſs and Debauchery; you little think what we ſuffer now for thoſe Merry Meetings we had together! O! Who can tell what it is to lye under the Senſe of the Wrath of an angry God as we do? And what dreadful Apprehenſions we have of that Black and diſmal Eternity that we muſt ſpend, when our Bodies and Souls are reunited? O what would we give to return to the World again, but---*Woe, Woe, Woe to us Damned Wretches!* Take Warning by us, leaſt you alſo come to this Place of Torments; Repent and Reform, or ſhortly you will be with us, and know what we tell you by woful Experience; for could we tell you but one half of what we endure, we could not make you Senſible of it. I remember, I have Read of one, who being riſen from the Dead, and being asked in what Condition he was, he Anſwered, *no Man doth Belive, no Man doth Believe, no Man doth Believe*; being asked what he meant by that Repetition, he anſwered, *no Man doth Believe how exactly God Examineth, how ſtrictly God Judgeth, how ſeverely he Puniſheth.* Now if ſuch ſhould appear to you with ſuch ſad Tydings from the other World, would you not be affrighted and ſtartled; bethink your ſelves, and reſolve upon another Courſe of Life? Why, Believe the Word of God which is moſt ſure and certain, which giveth you a moſt certain account of the State of the Damned in the other World. O Believe it, and flee from the Wrath to come, leaſt ſhortly you be amongſt them!

3. What if you ſhould ſee Hell opened, and ſee the Smoak aſcending out of the bottomleſs Pit? What if you could lay your Ears to *Tophet*, and hear the Shrieks and Cries of the Damned there, ſhould you ſee ſome of your old

old Companions in Sin among them, and hear them Curſing the Day that ever they knew you, and that ever they were in your Company; ſhould you hear them crying out upon you, that you drew them into thoſe Sins, that do now aggravate their Torments; and ſhould you ſee them in burning Flames, and themſelves as ſo many glowing Coals kindled by the Wrath of God, and hear their hideous Roarings and Cryings, fearful Yellings and Howlings, and Gnaſhing of their Teeth for Pain, all which ſhall certainly be hereafter; would not you be affected, and tremble at ſuch a ſight as this? I am perſwaded you would; why, you have as much Reaſon, nay, more to Believe the Report the Word of God giveth you concerning theſe things; and further to Believe, that in a ſhort time you ſhall be amongſt them in this Place of Torments, except you Repent, Reform, and accept of Salvation upon the Terms of the Goſpel.

4. What if the Devil ſhould come into your Chamber by Night, come to your Bed-ſide, and draw your Curtains, and look in upon you in a moſt ugly and hideous Shape, and tell you, tho' now you are ready to ſay you defy him, yet he will let you to know, you are his Slaves and Vaſſals, that you belong to his Kingdom of Darkneſs, and you do his Work, and he will Pay you for all hereafter in the Black Coyn of Hell, when you ſhall come to his Infernal Den of Darkneſs, and be Tormented with him in that Everlaſting Fire prepared for him? I am perſwaded this would Amaze and Startle you; now God hath told you this in his Word over and over, yet you will give no heed thereunto. The Word of God telleth you, *that the Devil Rules in the Hearts of the Children of Diſobedience*, and ſuch are you. Our Saviour told the *Jews*, that *they were of their Father the Devil, and his works they did do*; the ſame may be ſaid of you.

Can there now be any amongſt you that Read this, that are ſo hardned in Sin, as to make light of all theſe things? Why, Believe all to be as certainly True concerning the State of the Damned, as if you were already amongſt them; and what think you of your ſelves? what think you of your State and Condition? What if God ſhould

ſhould ſtrike you Dead with a Curſe or Oath in your Mouth, and while you are Prophaning the Sabbath, and while you are in the midſt of your Mirth, Jollitry and Debauchery, what think you would be your Caſe? All this that you have Read, and much more than can be repreſented to you, you muſt endure and ſuffer.

Obj. But ſome are ready to *Object* and ſay, it can never enter into our Hearts to Believe that God is ſo ſevere and rigorous to his Creatures, to Puniſh and Torture 'em ſo Extreamly, and that to Eternity, is not this Cruelty? How can it be conſiſtent with Divine Juſtice, to inflict Eternal Puniſhments for temporary Sins; what will his Juſtice be never ſatisfied? We our ſelves ſhould not be ſo Cruel to any brutiſh Creatures that do offend us, nor to the worſt of our Enemies, tho' they did never ſo much offend us; and if we who are ſilly Creatures, have Hearts ſo relenting, and ſo much Pitty as not to act ſo Cruelly, what is our Pitty, Compaſſion and Mercy to the Infinite Compaſſion, and boundleſs Mercy and Goodneſs of an Infinite God?

In Anſwer hereunto, Conſider what the Word of God ſaith concerning this.

As the Scripture ſetteth forth the Joys of Heaven to be *Eternal*, ſo alſo the Torments of Hell, Mat. 25. 46. *And theſe ſhall go away into Everlaſting puniſhment; but the Righteous into Life Eternal*; here is a direct Oppoſition to *Everlaſting Puniſhment and Everlaſting Life*; ſo that if one be Everlaſting, ſo is the other; and in Mark 9. 43. to the 48. the *Judge* himſelf there tells us, *Where the Worm dyeth not, and the Fire is not quenched, and the Fire that never ſhall be quenched*, and to Note the remarkableneſs, and ſhew the certainty of it, he repeateth it *over and over*; and Rev. 20: 10. *and ſhall be tormented Day and Night for ever and ever*. It is Evident then, that the Scripture declareth the Torments of the Damned to be Eternal: But I ſhall further propoſe a few things to your ſerious Conſideration, wherein I ſhall endeavour to Evince to you the reaſonableneſs of the proceedings of the Divine Juſtice againſt Impenitent, Obſtinate and Rebellious Sinners.

1. Since we find this is the *Statute Law* of Heaven, the determined Will of his Royal Soveraignty declared in the Scriptures; we may Conclude, that whatever God doth

in Judgment Pronounce, and conſequently Inflict, muſt neceſſarily be moſt Juſt and Righteous ; and we may as well conceive that there is no God, as that God is Unjuſt.

2. God hath created the *Soul* of Man *Immortal*, that it ſhall never ceaſe to have its being ; but run Parallel with Eternity, and hath in the World to come, provided only two States of Eternity, *Heaven and Hell*, and he hath ordained and eſtabliſhed an inſeparable Connexion between the Choice and Actions of Men here, and their future State hereafter ; now if God hath of his Infinite Goodneſs and Mercy offered Men Eternal Life and Glory upon the Gracious Terms of the Goſpel, if thereupon they will accept of Salvation ; and alſo threatens Eternal Miſery and Damnation upon the Obſtinate refuſing thereof ; if he ſets Heaven and Hell, Eternal Life and Eternal Death before them, and they will chuſe Hell rather than Heaven, Eternal Death rather than Eternal Life, is it not Reaſon they ſhould Inherit their own Choice, that if they refuſe Eternal Life, they ſhould ſuffer Eternal Death ?

3. It is Requiſite the Puniſhment ſhould be *proportioned* to the Guilt of Sin ; this is obſerved in all Courts of *Judicature*, and we know that the Degrees of the Dignity of the Perſon offended, renders the Offence more or leſs Heinous ; now the Majeſty of God, againſt whom Sin is committed is Infinite ; we may Conclude then, that the Puniſhment inflicted, will be in Proportion to the Glory of Gods Majeſty that is offended and provoked.

4. The *State* and the *Frame* of the Spirits of the Damned in Hell is ſuch, that it is not Conſiſtent with Reaſon, to Imagine, that God will reverſe the Sentence, mitigate their Puniſhment, or put a Period thereunto ; for they are always in a coninual hatred of God ; they are always Foaming out Curſes and Blaſphemies againſt God, and were it in their power, and could their Rage and Malice extend and reach unto God, they would in their Revenge dethrone him, and deſtroy his very Being.

5. Sin is of that abominable and malignant Nature, that it ſets it ſelf directly in *oppoſition* againſt God, and is Termed by ſome a *Deicidium*, as that which would deſtroy the

the very Being of God; the Guilt thereof then is ſo Immeſe, as being againſt an Infinite God, that it cannot be expiated untill a full Satisfaction be given; now the Juſtice of God, which is his Glorious Attribute, being Infinite, cannot be ſatisfied by Finite Creatures, by ought they can do or ſuffer; but Juſtice muſt be fully ſatisfied even to the utmoſt Farthing, before there can be a releaſe of the Damned out of Hell; and therefore muſt they lie in Hell to all Eternity, becauſe they are never able to ſatisfie it.

6. When *Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf the Son of God did undertake to ſatisfie Juſtice, the Guilt of the Sins of the Children of Men being transferred on him, tho' he was *God Man*, in whom the Divine and humane Nature was *Hypoſtatically* United, yet he could not ſatisfie Juſtice by his moſt farvent Prayers, Tears, Agonies, and Bloody Sweats; but he muſt lay down his Life, and endure thoſe dolorous Pains, and Sufferings both in Body and Soul, which were unconceiveable, being ſupported by the Divine Nature, which all the Angels in Heaven would have ſunk under, durſt they to have undertaken it; the Divine Nature gave an Infinite Value to the Sufferings of Chriſt, in ſo much that Divine Juſtice was fully ſatisfied; if then the Juſtice of God would not ſpare *his own Son*, his beloved Son, that did always thoſe things that pleaſed him, when the Guilt of Sinners was transferred on him, if Juſtice would abate him nothing, but he muſt Pay the utmoſt Farthing when he ſtood in the Room of Sinners, and put his Name into their Bond; can we rationally Imagine that God will in Favour to the Damned, which are filled with Rage and Enmity againſt him, mitigate or remove their Puniſhment, and give them a *Superſedeas* until Juſtice be fully ſatisfied? No ſurely; and ſince Finite Creatures are never able to do it, therefore their Torments muſt laſt to all Eternity.

Laſtly, Tho' Men are not now able to Reconcile in their Thoughts theſe dreadful *Proceedings* of God againſt Obſtinate, Impenitent Sinners with his Infinite Juſtice; and are ready to Term it Cruelty and Injuſtice, yet hereafter they will ſtand Speechleſs, their Conſciences will be

as a Thouſand Witneſſes againſt them, and Plead for God, and be forced to Acknowledge the Equity of God, that he is Infinitely Holy, Juſt, and Righteous in the Sentence which he paſſeth upon them: *God will be juſtified in his Sentence, and overcome when he Judgeth.*

Now methinks I hear the exclaiming of the preſumptious Sinner, and ſaying, what *Boanerges* is this? What *Son of Thunder?* What! Nothing but Flaſhes of Hell Fire, nothing but the Torments of Hell, the Shrieks and Cries of the Damned, nothing but Wrath and Vengeance, no Mercy at all, no Mercy for Sinners, as if there was no hope for us, but we muſt be Doom'd to Hell? Should we hearken to him, it would be enough to bring us into deſpair; it would be enough to ſcare and affright any Man out of his Wits. 'Tis true, we are Sinners we confeſs it, but God is Merciful, and he hath ſaid he doth not Delight in the Death of Sinners; and He is a God that pardoneth Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion and Sin; and Chriſt Died to ſave Sinners, and there be thoſe now in Heaven, that time was, were as great Sinners as we; and tho' we do take our Pleaſure now, we do propoſe to Repent and Reform hereafter, and if at laſt we cry to God for Mercy and Repent, we hope to be ſaved as well as others.

In Anſwer hereunto conſider,

1. How dreadful ſoever, it may be, enough indeed to make your Ears to *Tingle*, and your Hearts to *Tremble*; and what Thoughts ſoever you have hereof, 'tis no more than what I have proved to you from the Word of God to be your Doom, Lot, and Portion while you remain Obſtinate, Willful, and Impenitent Sinners. Read 2 Theſ. 1. 7, 8, 9. *When the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and Obey not the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; who ſhall be puniſhed with Everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power*, and Iſa. 48. 22. *There is no Peace ſaith the Lord unto the Wicked*, while you continue in this Impenitent State, nothing but Terror and Wrath belongs to you.

2. 'Tis true, God is Merciful, and Delights to ſhew Mercy to the Children of Men; he waiteth that he might be

be Gracious; and Chriſt Died to ſave Sinners: But who are thoſe that ſhall have Benefit by Chriſt, and ſhall be ſaved by him; not Sinners, while they continue in their Obſtinacy and Impenitency, but Humble, Penitent, broken-Hearted, and returning Sinners, that by Faith lay hold on him, and cloſe with him according to the Terms of the Goſpel, that Confeſs and forſake their Sins, that are willing to be Holy as well as Happy; therefore while you continue Impenitent, Obſtinate Sinners, expect no Salvation by Chriſt; and tho' God be Merciful in Chriſt our Mediator, yet to thoſe that have no Intereſt in Chriſt, he is a *conſuming Fire.*

3. Do you flatter your ſelves with hopes of Repentance hereafter? Why you can't promiſe your ſelves one Day, no not one Hour more to Live. O what aſtoniſhing Folly and Madneſs is it then in you? How can you give Sleep to your Eyes and Slumber to your Eye-lids; how can you walk up and down ſo unconcerned, when the Curſe of God is upon you, and you are on the very Brink of Hell, and do not know but before another Day, you may drop down into it? You have now Grace, Chriſt and Heaven offered unto you in the Goſpel, and will not you accept thereof yet? Not until hereafter, but why not immediately? You do not know how ſoon the Day of Grace may be over with you, if now you ſay *you will not*, God may ſay hereafter *you ſhall not*; And what is your Repentance at laſt, what your Death-Bed Repentance, that you flatter your ſelves withall? Let me Appeal to your own Conſciences, do you think it reaſonable that God ſhould Accept of you, ſhew you Mercy and ſave you, when you come upon a Death-Bed, when all your Life long you lived in the Service of the Devil in open Rebellion againſt him? You will Repent, and Cry to God for Mercy when you can Sin no longer; what is commonly the Death-Bed Repentance of ſuch? 'Tis not from the Senſe of the intrinſic Evil of Sin, or hatred to it as Sin, but becauſe of the dreadful Effects of Sin, the Wages of Sin they muſt Receive. I have known ſome Perſons upon their Sick-Beds, who when they have been in their own Apprehenſion under the Sentence of Death, having had their Conſciences awakned

awakned and ſoundly alarm'd, they have been under a dreadful Apprehenſion of the Wrath of God for their Sins, and have ſeemed to conceive a deep and hearty Sorrow for Sin; and this they have ſeemed to have vented in moſt Pathetical and Affectionate Wiſhes and Repentings, with many ſolemn Promiſes, Reſolutions and Vows, if God ſhould again reſtore them, how they would Reform and Live for the future; and yet thoſe very ſame Perſons, when it hath pleaſed God to reſtore them, and they have been recovered out of the Jaws of Death, have been as Vile, or more Diſſolute than ever they were before: Pray obſerve this, had thoſe very Perſons then died, their Friends might have conceived that they had good Grounds of hope concerning them, that they were Happy. *'Tis very rare that a Death-Bed Repentance, is a true Repentance.* Know that a ſaving, Evangelical Repentance, a Repentance unto Life is the Gift of God; you cannot thus Repent nor Believe of your ſelves, and if you trifle away your precious time, and will not wait on God in the uſe of the Means he hath appointed in order thereunto, but ſpend your Days in ſatisfying the Luſts of your Fleſh, how can you expect that God ſhall give it you when you come to Dye, when you have done the Devils Work, and ſerved him all the Days of your Life? Do you think to have the Reward of the Saints, when you could not endure to Live the Life of the Righteous, do you think to Die the Death of the Righteous? But alas! How many poor Creatures deceive themſelves, when notorious Sinners come upon a Death-Bed, if then they are troubled for their Sins, and ſay they Repent, and ſend for the Miniſter, or other Private Chriſtians for Pray for them, and they cry to God for Mercy, and ſay they hope to be ſaved by Chriſt; After their Death, ſuch amongſt ſome, ſhall be canoniz'd for Saints, their Carnal Friends and Relations will ſay, they hope they are well, they made a good End, when *poor Wretches*, they are numbred amongſt the *Damned?* O how many ſuch Preſumptuous Wretches are there now in Hell! that, time was, did thus flatter themſelves with hopes of Mercy, becauſe God is Merciful, and Chriſt died for Sinners, partly from a ſelf Love, as being

ing loath to Believe they ſhould be Damned, and partly from the Deluſion of the Devil. But O what are the hopes and falſe Peace of ſuch, they and their Hopes give up the *Ghoſt* and Die together; who can conceive the Rueful Caſe of ſuch poor Souls, when once they are departed out of their Bodies; they that a few Minutes before, thought themſelves fair for Heaven, and hoped to be ſaved, now ſee themſelves in the Paws of the Devil, and hear the Devils Inſulting and Triumphing over them, now they ſee themſelves loſt and undone to all Eternity.

Now by this time, methinks I hear the convinced Sinner crying out, is this ſo indeed? Is this my very Caſe? Then I am an undone Man; I ſee if God ſhould now cut me off by Death, there is no hope but I muſt be Damned to all Eternity, and O how can I think of being Damned; my Heart *quakes*, and my Fleſh *trembles* at the Thoughts thereof; how ſhall I be able to bear thoſe unſpeakable Torments to all Eternity? *My Fleſh is not Iron, nor my Bones Braſs*; what to be ever Dying, and yet never Die; to be always Burning, and yet never Conſumed! I am amazed and confounded, *Horror* and *Trembling* ſeizes my Spirits? Am I indeed like to be a *Fire-Brand* of Hell, and a Companion with frightful Devils and Damned Spirits? Is this indeed the end of all my ſinful Pleaſures and ſenſual Delights, wherewith I pleaſed my Fleſh? But is there not yet hope concerning me? O what ſhall I do! What ſhall I do to eſcape this Place of Torments, what ſhall I do to be ſaved? I ſee I muſt leave my old Courſe of Life; I muſt become a new Man, or I am undone; well, I am reſolved upon a Reformation.

If any of you are thus convinced of your undone and miſerable Condition by Nature, and are in good earneſt, Inquiſitive to know what you ſhall do to be ſaved; I ſhall give you a few Directions to ſhew you what Courſe you muſt take, as ever you hope to be ſaved, having in the firſt Place premiſed a few things by way of Caution.

1. Take heed of making Vows and Promiſes, and ſetting up Reſolutions for a Reformation of Life in your own Strength; this is that which hath undone many, when they have been convinced of their Evil Courſe of Life,

Life, and ſee they are like to be undone except they Reform, then they make Promiſes and ſet up Reſolutions, that they will Refrain from thoſe Sins they were accuſtomed to, and ſet upon the Performance of Duties, and they will now live a new Life; but no ſooner doth a Temptation aſſail them, but they fall into the ſame Courſe of Life as before, forgetting all their Vows and Promiſes; and then if Conſcience again ſtartles them, they fall to the renewing their Promiſes and Reſolutions, but with no better ſucceſs than before. This is the Courſe of many to their dying Day.

2. Take heed of laying too much ſtreſs upon an outward *Reformation* as if you ſhould be ſaved thereby; if *Conſcience* doth its Office, and keeps a ſtrict Eye over you, forceth you to a Reformation, and will not ſuffer you to fall into your old Courſe of Life, nor to live in the Neglect of Duties, ſo that you dare not do as formerly, leaſt you ſhould meet with ſharp Checks and Rebukes from Conſcience; take heed of laying too much ſtreſs upon this, to think now you are in a good Caſe, and you ſhall be ſaved, becauſe that heretofore you were Prophane, given to Drunkenneſs, Debauchery and lewd Practices; but now it is otherwiſe with you; heretofore you lived in the neglect of Duties, but now you are careful to Perform them. Deceive not your ſelves, if this be the only Ground of hope you have that you ſhall be ſaved; I muſt tell you, you will come ſhort of Heaven at laſt.

3. Beware that your Convictions be not ſtifled, prove Abortive, and Die away without Iſſuing in a ſound Converſion in order hereunto.

1. Take heed of *Evil Company*, take heed you are not inſnared by your Old Companions; they will do what they can to Laugh and Jeer you out of your Convictions, they will tell you they are Melancholy Whimſies, meer *Chimeras* of a troubled Fancy, and it ſhews a poor daſtardly Spirit to give way unto them. Many by this Means have had their Convictions ſtifled, who once were in an hopeful Caſe; fear leaſt this ſhould be your Caſe alſo; remember 'tis a Critical time with you: Shake off all your Old Companions in Sin, look upon them as the Enemies

mies of your Souls, that would hinder your Salvation, and draw you head-long to Hell with themſelves.

2. Beware of the *Temptations* of the Devil, he hath many Wiles and Stratagems to delude poor Souls, and eſpecially when under Convictions. Sometimes he will Tempt them to Preſumption, and at other times to Deſpair; he is a ſubtil and Envious Spirit, that will Watch to take all Opportunities, and try all Methods and Means to hinder their Salvation; and then eſpecially, when he is afraid of looſing them, he will uſe all his Strength and Subtilty imaginable. When a poor Soul is ſtartled, and his Conſcience is awakned to purpoſe, he will endeavour to ſtop the Mouth of Conſcience, and bring it a Sleep, and flatter the Soul with Preſumptuous hopes of Mercy; or if he cannot do that, he will Tempt to Deſpair; he will ſometimes Act as a Subtil *Serpent*, and cunning Sophiſter to deceive the Soul; ſometimes as a Roaring *Lion* to affright him.

If a poor Sinner is troubled in his Conſcience for his Sins, and they Stare him in his Face, and fill him with Horror and Trembling, he will endeavour to Extenuate thoſe Sins wherewith Conſcience is burdened, as if they were not ſo great, and that he need not keep ſo much a-doe about them; he will tell him, God is Merciful to Pardon them how great ſoever they are; he will endeavour alſo in the mean time, to Entertain him with all the Diverſion he can, if poſſibly he may keep Conſcience quiet, and Tempt him to put off Repentance until hereafter, when he may be in a better Frame. But if this will not do, and Conſcience will not be ſatisfied, but tells the Sinner he muſt break off from Sins, Reform, and live another manner of Life, or he will be Damn'd; and the Sinner hereupon begins to ſet up Reſolutions for a Reformation, Satan will then take another Courſe with him, he will ſuffer him to make Vows and Promiſes for a Reformation, and living a new Life; yea, if he doth not help on, and ſtir him up hereunto, at leaſt he will Connive thereat, knowing how to take Advantage upon him afterward by his Falls; this being done, he may leave him for a little Seaſon, and now there may be ſome outward

Reformation, and the Soul may ſeem to bid fair for Heaven; but it is not long before he returns again, and makes freſh Aſſaults on him, and tries what he can do, not only by himſelf, but his Inſtruments. Namely, Evil Company, his former ſinful Companions, he will ſtir them up to be earneſt and urgent with him to draw him to Sin; and eſpecially that Sin he was moſtly inclin'd to before, his darling Sin, be it what it will, and if at laſt the Soul is overcome by their Temptations, Yields and Complies with them, and falls again into it, or into any of thoſe which he had before Vowed and reſolved againſt; eſpecially, if he falls again and again into thoſe Sins after reiterated Promiſes, and renewed Vows and Reſolutions, and Conſcience then flies in his Face again; he is then in a worſe Cauſe than he was before, the Devil then takes Advantage thereof, and Suggeſts to him after this manner. Thou ſeeſt what are become of thy Vows and Reſolutions, thou haſt often made Promiſes, and haſt as often broken them; thou haſt ſet up Reſolutions, but haſt been falſe to them: Perplex thou thy ſelf no more; what need ſo much preciſeneſs, there are others are greater Sinners than thou art, tho' thou art not ſo Holy as a few, thou mayeſt notwithſtanding go to Heaven as well as they; for if none ſhould go to Heaven but they, even a few *Preciſians*, of whom thou ſeeſt but here and there one, what will become of Multitudes, even the Generality of Men! No, perſwade thy ſelf, God is more Merciful than ſo, to Damn all except them; now in the mean time, he uſeth all means imaginable to ſtop the Mouth of Conſcience, and lull it aſleep; but if all this will not do, but an awakned Conſcience flies upon the Sinner, takes him by the Throat, and will not be pacified, but is the more inraged, then the Devil will Tempt to Deſpair, and wil follow the Soul with horrible Blaſphemous Suggeſtions againſt God, which will even make him Tremble; he will Suggeſt to him Evil and hard Thoughts of God, that God hath no Mercy for him, that he is not of the Number of thoſe whom God hath Elected, God denies to give him Faith and Repentance which he gives to the Elect, he will have no Benefit by the Death of Chriſt; and therefore do what he

he will, he will be Damned, and he that told him before *it was time enough* to Repent, and Tempted him to put off Repentance until hereafter, will now tell him *'tis too late*, to what purpoſe therefore is it for him to wait on God any longer; and hereupon he will endeavour to Poſſeſs him with what Horror he can; and now the poor Soul is in the very Suburbs of Hell; he is even beſides himſelf, at his Wits end, he knows not what to do, nor whither to go; then is he at Hand to Tempt him to make himſelf away, to be his own Executioner; and will be very urgent with him, inceſſantly following him with Temptations hereunto, and that with great Vehemency; he will tell him that hereby he will free himſelf of that Horror and Perplexity he is in, and if he hearkens to him, he is preſently Poſſeſt with Ten Thouſand times more inexpreſſible Horror; he becomes the Devil Prey in a *Hopeleſs, Helpleſs, and Remedileſs* State. But who can recount the many Wiles, and Various Stratagems the Devil hath to delude poor Souls, and hinder their Salvation?

3. Beware of the *Snares* and *Allurements* of the World; take heed you do not looſe your Convictions in a Croud of Worldly Buſineſs; beware of Worldly Incumbrances: Let not the World Intrench upon that time which you ſhould ſpend for your Souls. Give not the World leave to borrow time of Duty; if it doth, be ſure to ſee it Paid again, rather Redeem time from the World for Duty. If your Earthly Concerns, and Religion come to ſtand in Competition, let them ſtand by, and give Place to Religion, and not Religion to them. And take heed of Drowning your Convictions in the Pleaſures of the World, which is the Courſe of many, when they are troubled in their Conſciences, they will endeavour this way to find out Means to Divert themſelves, as by Drinking, by Sports and Paſtimes, as *Saul* did when he called for his Muſick; and ſo their Convictions never Iſſue in a ſound Converſion. But know, whatever Means you make uſe of to ſtop the Mouth of Conſcience now, becauſe it is troubleſome to you, and will not make uſe of proper Means to have it duely pacified, it will hereafter be awakned to purpoſe, and Roar upon you, and will

never be pacified; it will be a Worm, that will keep gnawing upon you, and never Die. Therefore ſay not, if I ſhould indulge, and entertain ſuch Thoughts as ſometimes Conſcience doth Alarm me with, 'tis enough to make me amaz'd, diſtracted, and run Mad; why if you cannot bear the Rebukes of Conſcience now, and will not hearken unto it ſpeaking from the Word, what will you do hereafter in Hell, when Conſcience ſhall Gripe, Gnaw, and Torment Ten Thouſand times more? O what think you will your Caſe be then!

I now proceed to give you ſome Directions.

1. Be ſenſible not only of the Guilt and Vileneſs of your *Actual* Sins, but alſo of your *Original* Sin; be ſenſible of the Pollution and Uncleanneſs of your Hearts, from whence all do flow, and be deeply humbled before the Lord. Did you Read over the black Bill of Indictment, that Conſcience can draw up againſt you; did you ſee all your Actual Sins ſtaring you in the Face in their own proper Hew and Ugline ſs, the ſight thereof would amaze you, and make you Tremble; but could you look into your Hearts from whence all flow, thoſe Dens of Uncleanneſs, the Fountain Spring, and Original of all; could you ſee that Enmity, and *Diametrical* Oppoſition that is in your Hearts againſt God, and that Proneneſs and Inclination to all manner of Evil, in ſo much as 'tis natural to you, as Poyſon is to a Toad, the Sight thereof would be enough to confound you.

2. Be convinced of your own *inability* to ſave your ſelves, by ought you can do; you are Bond-ſlaves to Sin and Satan, and you cannot Reſcue your ſelves, nor break off your Chains and Fetters; you are by Nature Dead in Sins and Treſpaſſes, and you can no more enliven, nor quicken your ſelves to Live a Spiritual Life, than the Dead can raiſe themſelves out of their Graves; you muſt be regenerated and Born again, have a Principle of Spiritual Life infuſed in you; and this you can no more do, than at firſt you could Create your ſelves.

3. Be convinced that there is no Salvation for you, but by and thro' the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; there is no coming to God but by him. Study the Scriptures, ſearch into the Myſteries

Myſteries of the Goſpel, the Tenour and Terms of the Covenant of Grace. Without an Union and Intereſt in Chriſt, you can have no Benefit by Chriſt in order to Salvation, and this you muſt have by Faith. Know that there is no Righteouſneſs can ſtand before God in order to our Juſtification, but a perfect Righteouſneſs, and this the Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath wrought out for all thoſe that are his, and is Imputed to them for their Juſtification, who do by Faith believe on him, taking him upon his own Terms in all his Offices, as Prophet, Prieſt, and King, and in thoſe Chriſt infuſeth the Graces of his Spirit for their Sanctification, hereby making them meet to be Partakers of that Glorious Inheritance he hath purchaſed for them.

4. Be convinced that you cannot Believe in Chriſt of your ſelves, nor Repent of your ſelves. Faith and Repentance are the Gifts of God, a True and ſaving Faith, and Evangelical Repentance are wrought only by the Spirit of God.

Now if any of you are come thus far, as to be Prick't and Pain'd at the Heart, to be Truly and Deeply Humbled under the Senſe of your Sinful and Miſerable State by Nature, and are ready to cry out; O fain we would be ſaved upon any Terms whatſoever, but what ſhall we do ſince we cannot Believe, nor Repent of our ſelves, what Courſe ſhall we take!

I ſhall only leave with you a few Directions in General; but if any of you are come thus far, I have my deſign and end in Writing. Give God the Glory, there is Hope concerning you.

Wait on God in the uſe of all means he hath appointed, be Attentive, and Diligent in Reading and Hearing his Word, and Attending on his Ordinances, and chuſe to Attend on that Miniſtry which is moſt powerful and awakening, for Remember 'tis for your Life.

Be much in ſerious Meditation, communing with your own Hearts. Think on your miſerable State and Condition by Nature, in the Morning as ſoon as you awake, and be every Day looking into your Graves, and beyond your Graves into Eternity. Repreſent to your ſelves the Day

Day of Judgment, with the great ſolemnity thereof, (*viz.*) The Trumpet ſounding, the Graves opened, the Dead riſing, and the Lord Jeſus the great Judge deſcending with the Glorious Saints and Angels; and in the terribleneſs of his Majeſty ſitting upon his Judgment Seat, Summoning the World to appear before him. Think with your ſelves, what Horror, Trembling, and Heart quaking will there be amongſt all the Wicked; *poor wretched Creatures*, when they ſhall hear their dreadful Doom, and irrevocable Sentence, *depart from me ye Curſed*, &c. Think one while of the Joys of Heaven, and another while of the Torments of Hell; reallize them to your ſelves, and then think ſeriouſly with your ſelves, in which of theſe two your Lot would be caſt, if now you ſhould Die; and Examine your ſelves, and try your State by the Word of God; for by that you will be tryed hereafter.

Think when you lie down at Night, what you have done the Day paſt; how you ſhould be able to give an Account for the Actions thereof, and with what Comfort you could Reflect upon them, if now you were on a Death-Bed.

Be much alſo in Prayer, and eſpecially in ſecret Prayer, crying earneſtly to God, pouring out your Souls before him, as thoſe that cannot take a denial, that muſt have Mercy, or you are Damned to all Eternity; and this do, not in a form of Prayer, but in conceived Expreſſions of your own, from a deep Senſe of your want and Miſery. Cry for Mercy, and a Pardon in the Name of Jeſus Chriſt, with that Earneſtneſs and Concernedneſs, as a condemned Malefactor would beg for Pardon, and as an Hunger ſtarved Man for Bread, and yet with all Importunity, and Fervency of Spirit be crying to God, waiting at his Foot-ſtool, reſolving if you Periſh, you will Periſh Praying, and crying for Mercy. Never give over, but wait, tho' God doth not hear you preſently, it is meet you ſhould wait; remember it was a long time God waited on you for your returning unto him. Pour out your Souls before him in ſuch Words as theſe.

Lord, never a Poorer or more miſerable Wretch came to thee for Mercy than I; I moſt humbly Confeſs, I have been a Re-

a Rebel againſt thy Glorious Majeſty; I have broken thy Laws, and have in my Heart naturally an Enmity againſt thee, wherefore I am now under thy Curſe, and that moſt Righteouſly O Lord. I am caſt and condemned by thy Holy and Righteous Law; yet hitherto, in thine Infinite Patience, haſt thou given me a Reprieve, but thou mayeſt now juſtly Spurn me out of thy Preſence, and Sentence and Doom me to Hell; but Bleſſed Lord, I am now at the Throne of Grace, and not at thy Judgment Seat, tho' I have been a Rebellious Sinner, I now lay down my Arms of Hoſtility, I humbly proſtrate my ſelf at thy Feet, with all brokenneſs of Heart; I have heard of thee by the hearing of the Ear, what a Gracious God thou art, thou haſt iſſued forth thy Royal Proclamation of Grace and Pardon.

I have heard of the Covenant of Grace, which thou haſt of thy Soveraign good Will and Pleaſure, entred into with fall'n Mankind. I have heard what thy Son whom thou didſt ſend into the World to be the Redeemer of Mankind hath done, and ſuffered in order to their Salvation. I have heard of the Terms on which thou haſt tendred him in the Goſpel to poor Sinners, and how he hath invited poor Sinners to come to him, and promiſed that they ſhall be Welcome; he hath ſaid, that whoever comes to him, he will in no wiſe caſt out. Lord, are they not thine own Words? I an unworthy Wretch, am humbly Bold to take Incouragement from this, and all other thy Gracious Promiſes made to poor Sinners. O thou Merciful and Gracious God, Remember thine own Gracious Nature; Remember thine own Son, what he hath done and ſuffered; Remember thine own Promiſes, and conſult the Bowels of thy Compaſſion! Lord, thou haſt ſaved others, and why not me? Haſt not thou a Bleſſing for me, even for me alſo? O let not thy poor Creature which thou haſt made, Periſh, when it is in the Power of thine Hands to ſave me! Lord, I cannot come to Chriſt of my ſelf, except thou draweſt me, I cannot Believe nor Repent of my ſelf. Lord, as thou haſt ſent thy Son, ſend thy Spirit alſo to work Faith in my Heart, and all the ſaving Graces of thy Spirit. O that I might have the ſweet Drawings, and Influences of thy Holy Spirit.

Lord, ſave me, or I periſh; here will I lie at thy Feet, I will Pray, and Cry, and wait, if peradventure I may obtain

Favour

Favour in thy ſight; and tho' Lord, as I have confeſt, I have been a Rebel againſt thee, a loathſome and abominable Wretch in thy ſight, for my own Conſcience condemns me, and I muſt cry Guilty, Lord, Guilty; loathing and abhorring my ſelf in Duſt and Aſhes; yet Lord, haſt not thou Mercy for ſuch, did not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt aſſend on high, and receive Gifts for Men, even for the Rebellious; I would be humbly Bold to plead his Blood, his Merits, and Righteouſneſs. He is worthy that thou ſhouldeſt ſhew Mercy to me, and thou mayeſt now not only be Merciful, but Juſt and Faithful to forgive me thro' his Merits, if I may but have an Intereſt in him. O Merciful God, have pitty on me for his ſake.

And then keep a ſtrict Watch over your hearts every day; beware leaſt you ſhould loſe your Convictions before they iſſue in a ſound Work of Converſion; you have Enemies both within and without, the Devil, the Fleſh, and the World, that will do what they can to hinder the Salvation of your Souls; you are in danger hereby to looſe your Convictions, and grow into a Luke-warm Frame: And O dread the very Thoughts thereof! Remember 'tis a Critical time with you, the Life of your Souls lies at Stake; if your Convictions Die away now, you may never have any more.

Before I Conclude, I think it neceſſary to Anſwer an Objection which is commonly made; many there are, who ſay, if we are not of the Number of thoſe whom God hath Elected, and Ordained to Salvation, do what we will, yea, do what we can, we ſhall be Damned: We cannot Regenerate our ſelves, nor Repent, nor Believe of our ſelves; therefore to what purpoſe is it for us to do any thing at all; if God hath Elected us, we ſhall be Saved, Live how we will; if not, do what we can, weſhall be Damne. In anſwer hereunto,

Conſider, as God hath appointed the end, ſo alſo the means in order thereunto: Tho' you cannot repent, or believe of your ſelves, yet you can wait on God in the uſe of the means he hath appointed, wherein he is want to be found, wait at Wiſdom's Gate. Wait on God in his Ordinances, as the poor impotent Man at the Pool of *Betheſda*; and be earneſt with God in Prayer, who knoweth

knoweth but God may be gracious unto you. There is a *Peradventure* for you that you may be ſaved; and methinks that ſhould be an incouragment to you: You may pray in hope, if you are not obſtinate, but returning Sinners; and this you muſt do with all vigour and earneſtneſs of Soul: You muſt *ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait gate*; they are not a few lazy and cold *wiſhings* and *wouldings* will ſerve the turn, *you muſt take the Kingdom of Heaven with an holy violence*. Now, What ſay you? Do you this? If ſo, there is great hope concerning you; but if you are negligent in making uſe of the Means God hath appointed, it is a very bad ſign and ſymptom; and know this, that your Damnation will lie at your own Door. If any one ſhould tell you, that he believeth that every one ſhall live out his ſet time that God hath appointed, and therefore he will never Eat nor Drink more: What would you ſay to ſuch an one? And if accordingly he ſhould take this courſe and ſtarve himſelf, would not you ſay he was his own Murtherer, his Death muſt lie at his own door? You may eaſily make Application, the caſe is the ſame here. To illuſtrate this, very remarkable is that inſtance of the Apoſtle *Paul*, when in that dangerous Voyage, he with the reſt were in danger to ſuffer Shipwrack, the Angel of the Lord told him, *that they ſhould all be ſaved*, Acts 27. from 22. to the 25. yet afterward verſ. 30, 31. when the Shipmen were about to flie out of the Ship, *Paul* ſaid to the Centurion, *except theſe abide in the Ship, ye cannot be ſaved*.

But yet to reply further, Doth not the fault lie rather in your Wills? Cannot you do much more than you do if you would? Could not the young Man in the Goſpel have hearkened to the advice of our Saviour if he would; when he told him, *he ſhould ſell what he had, and give to the poor and follow him*, and *he ſhould have treaſure in Heaven*, did, not the fault lie in his Will? He would not. And our Saviour tells the *Jews*, they would not come to him that they might have Life. Cannot you, if you will, leave off your Curſing, Swearing, Intemperance, and Debauchery, and cannot you improve the Talent God hath beſtowed upon you if you would? And let me appeal to your ſelves, Can you rationally expect God ſhould give you more, if

you will not improve that which you have? Cannot you act as Rational Creatures, and entertain a ſerious Conſideration of your State and Condition by Nature? Cannot you repreſent to your ſelves the reality and certainty of the two eternal States, Heaven and Hell, and would you not by the Examination of your ſelves, by the Word of God come to be ſenſible of your State, and the danger you are in? And would not the conſideration of your danger make an impreſſion upon your Hearts, and ſtirr you up to flee from the wrath to come? And in order hereunto, Could you not be diligent in improving all the Means God hath appointed in order to Salvation? Could you not be diligent in reading and hearing the Word, ſet up Prayer in your Families, and be often in ſecret Prayer in your Cloſets? And could you not be more ſtrict in obſervation of the Lord's Day? Could not you, I ſay, do all this had you but a Will thereunto? Therefore if you are damned, is it not not of your ſelves? Was it ever known, that any one was heartily and ſincerely willing to be ſaved in God's way, and upon his Terms he hath propoſed, and accordingly did make uſe of all means in order thereunto, with all diligence and earneſtneſs, yet was not ſaved? Can any one inſtance be brought? God waiteth that he may be gracious, and is ready to welcome any *Returning* Sinner. *And thoſe that come to Chriſt, he will in no wiſe caſt out.* If any of you ſhould dare to ſay to God hereafter at the day of Judgment, Lord thou did'ſt not elect me, nor give me Faith and Repentance, and therefore I could not be ſaved: Might not God then anſwer terribly in his wrath, and ſay, *Thou wretch*, thou would'ſt not make uſe of the means; when others were Praying, and Reading, and Hearing my Word, thou wert ſloathful, thou wert indulging thy Luſts, and ſquandring away thy time that I gave thee? The Talent that thou had'ſt, thou did'ſt hide under the Ground, and did'ſt not improve it, and could'ſt thou expect then that I ſhould give thee more? Wert thou ever in good earneſt, and hearty in thy Prayers to me for Faith and the Graces of my Spirit? No thou had'ſt never any ſincere and hearty deſire for them: Thou did'ſt ſlight the Offers and Tenders of Grace made unto thee, and did'ſt

dſt'ſt prefer thy Luſts, and the ſatisfying of them, before me. What anſwer wilt thou make to this? Thou wilt ſtand ſpeechleſs, and be reduced to a defenceleſs ſilence.

Now, *Reader*, I beſeech thee, take theſe things into ſerious conſideration; conſider with thy ſelf what thy ſtate and condition is, art thou a Child of God, or the Devil, belongeſt thou to Heaven or to Hell? Let conſcience ſpeak, do not flatter thy ſelf: What Grounds of Hope haſt thou? Haſt thou lived Thirty, Forty, Fifty Years, and never had any convictions at all? Then certainly thou art a ſtranger to a Work of Converſion, and art in a Graceleſs and Chriſtleſs State. O tremble at the thoughts hereof, 'tis a damnable State! Or art thou one that haſt had Convictions, and only Convictions, that never iſſued in Converſion? Haſt thou lived many Years under a powerful and awakening Miniſtry, and yet not converted? I muſt tell thee, there is but little hope of thee, thy caſe is exceeding dangerous, tho, not deſperate: 'Tis to be feared thou haſt heard Sermons ſo long, that thou art now grown Sermon-proof; and haſt been under Convictions ſo often, that thou art now become Conviction-proof: If thou can'ſt read and hear Diſcourſes of this nature, and be nothing at all, or but little concerned, 'tis to be feared thou art given up to a judicial hardneſs of Heart; and a Miniſter may have more hope to ſee the Fruits of his Labours, if he Preach amongſt Heathens, and Pagans, than amongſt ſuch as thou art. Yet do not deſpair, who knows but God may be gracious to thee, if thou wilt yet in good earneſt follow the Advice here given; and why wilt thou not? 'Tis for thy Life; 'tis for thy Eternity; but if thou wilt not, I can aſſure thee, that what thou haſt read, together with all the Sermons thou haſt heard, will riſe up in Judgment againſt thee hereafter, and aggravate thy Miſery and Torments to all Eternity.

O that what I have here propoſed to thy ſerious conſideration, might have ſuch an influence on thee, to alarm and awaken thee out of thy ſtupidity and ſecurity, as may never be worn off, until being ſoundly convinced of thy miſerable State: Thou art *indefatigable* in the diligent uſe of all Means in order to thy Converſion: and that thou

mayeſt not only be affected and ſtartled for the preſent in the reading thereof; but that it might ever have an abiding Impreſſion on thy Heart, I beſeech thee make it the daily ſubject of thy Thoughts and Meditations. To help thee herein, I ſhall give thee a few hints, and ſo conclude.

1. When ever thou art indulging thy Fleſh, quaffing, and carouzing; *think with thy ſelf*, As merry as I am now, I may be in Hell before to morrow Morning: There may be but a few Steps, a few Breaths betwixt me and Hell.

2. After thou haſt been indulging thy Fleſh, *think with thy ſelf*, theſe ſinful Pleaſures muſt be repented of, they may coſt me many briniſh Tears, Groans, and Sighs, or I muſt be damned for them: I have been now making Work for Repentance, or adding Fewel to my Flames in Hell.

3. When thou art ſitting by the Fire, *think with thy ſelf*, What if I were to be caſt into the hotteſt Fire that can be made, ſuch as *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Furnace, and it were poſſible for me to endure the Torture thereof one day. How miſerable ſhould I think my caſe to be? But what would this be to the Fire of Hell, and what would one day be to Eternity?

4, If ever thou art under the dreadful pains of the *Cholick*, *Stone*, *Rheumatiſm*, or ſuch like torturing Diſeaſes; or if thou viſiteſt others that are afflicted, and cry out under their torturing Pains, then *think with thy ſelf*, What are theſe to the Torments of Hell? Tho' theſe Pains be violent, there is ſometimes Intermiſſion or Remiſſion; here are Friends to pity and help, and other Accomodations to relieve; but there is none of all this in Hell.

5. When thou art in thy Bed at Night, *think with thy ſelf*; If the Devil ſhould appear to me now in a frightful, gaſtly form, How would it ſcare and terrifie me? But what amazing Horror ſhall I be ſeized with, if I ſhould come to ſpend an Eternity with them all in Hell, where they will do what they can to torture me? If the Devil ſo cruelly handled *Job* when it was in his power, as far as God gave him permiſſion, How cruelly will he torture damned Creatures, when he ſhall have his full power on them without reſtraint.

6. *Think*

6. *Think with thy ſelf every day,* As I ſpend my time here, I muſt ſpend my Eternity hereafter: On this little moment of time depends my Eternity: As I live here, I muſt live for ever.

Now the God of Heaven, whoſe voice rends the Rocks, and makes the Mountains to quake, and the Foundations of the Earth to tremble; Speak to the Hearts and Conſciences of Sinners, and make ſturdy and rebellious Sinners to ſtoop and bow before him. O that they might hear the voice of the Son of God in the Goſpel, and hearing they might live! O that the Holy Spirit might convince them of Sin, and then of Righteouſneſs! Except the Holy Spirit manage the two edged Sword of the Word, it will do but little or no Execution.

The Lord ſtirr up all to uſe all the moſt effectual Means and Methods, according to their Capacity to promote a Reformation, and the Lord proſper their Endeavours. And O that this Eſſay for Reformation, *tho' ſmall, and (it may be) contemptible in the eyes of ſome, may go forth Cloathed with Power in the Name of the Lord, and with the Bleſſing of the God of Heaven. Let there be the effectual Concurrence of the Spirit of God with it, to the Conviction and* Converſion of *Thouſands, to the demoliſhing the Kingdom of Sin and Satan, and the advancing and inlarging the Kingdom of Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

In the Epiſtle, for Tri'd *read* Hid, *for* Survivor *r.* Survive, *for when once God comes to theſe, r.* this.

In the Book.

Page 1 *line* 17 *for* of, *read* thereof, *p.* 8 *l.* 24 *for* hearts *r.* houſes *p.* 11 *l.* 19 *r.* and you that, *p.* 20 *l.* laſt *for* treating *r.* trading. *p.* 21 *l.* 20 *for* ſet up *r* ſit up. *p.* 21 *l.* 33 *for* duties, *r.* daies *p.* 38 *l.* 2 *for* were *r* are. *p.* 44 *l.* 21 *for* propoſe *r.* purpoſe, *p.* 46 *l.* 31 *for* for pray *r.* to pray. *p.* 54 *l.* 31 blot out yet.

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